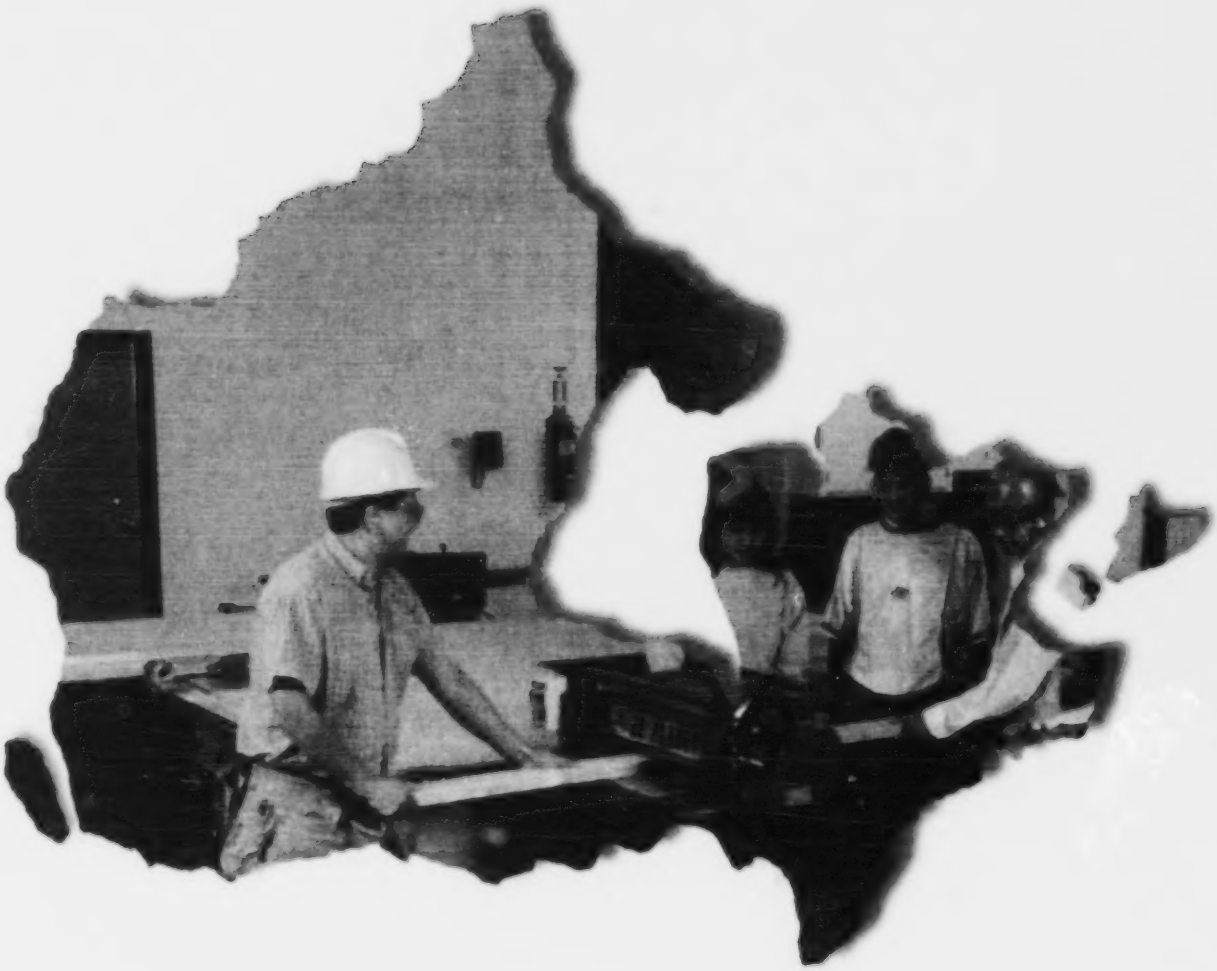
ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN APPRENTICESHIP

Making It Work!



The Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) is made up of partners from business, labour, education and training, and the equity groups (women, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and members of visible minorities), working together to develop a highly skilled Canadian workforce that contributes to the well-being of Canadians and a productive and prosperous economy.

The notion of 'working together' to bring about positive change is often articulated but seldom translated into key principles of public policy. The CLFDB — a national, not-for-profit organization — was established in 1991 in response to the growing consensus that labour market partners should play a greater role in training and human resource development in Canada. The Board's mission is to work toward the creation of a coherent and coordinated system of labour force development that is equitable, effective and efficient.

The Board is made up of 22 voting members: eight representatives each from business and labour, two from the education and training community, and one from each of the four equity groups. Board members are nominated by the constituencies they represent — over 70 national organizations. Provincial/territorial and federal departments responsible for labour force matters are represented by non-voting members. The Board works by consensus.

The CLFDB co-chairs have also been selected by their constituents: Gary Johncox, Vice President of Human Resources of MacMillan Bloedel Limited, as Business Co-chair; and Jean-Claude Parrot, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress as Labour Co-chair.

The CLFDB mandate is to:

- play a lead role in developing commitment to training and labour force development in Canada;
- advocate more, relevant, higher quality and accessible training;
- provide direction on key aspects of training and labour adjustment policies and programs; and
- provide the labour market partners with opportunities to conduct meaningful dialogue and build consensus.

© CLFDB # 40
June 1999
All rights reserved.
ISBN 1-895813-76-X

This report is also available in alternative formats. For more information or additional copies of this report, contact:

Canadian Labour Force Development Board
1204-66 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H1
Tel (613) 230-6264
Fax (613) 230-7681
E-mail: info@clfdb.ca
Web Site: www.clfdb.ca

ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN APPRENTICESHIP

Making It Work!

Report of the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects Steering Committee

A joint effort of

- the National Apprenticeship Committee of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board,
- the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship,
- Human Resources Development Canada,
- the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs, and
- the Aboriginal Community.

PREFACE

A new *baby boom* is underway in Canada, and its influence is just beginning to be felt. Within the next 20 years, this baby boom could help create an economic success story or be the source of an economic problem. This baby boom is occurring among Canada's Aboriginal population which is growing twice as fast as the non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal youth are tomorrow's workers and consumers. But they will need to have skills that are demanded in the workplace and opportunities and access to well-paying jobs. At the moment, the average unemployment rate among Aboriginal people is double that among non-Aboriginal people. And their average income level is one-half to two-thirds that of non-Aboriginal people. To make this baby boom a success story, Canada must invest more in the development of skills and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people today.

Apprenticeship is a system of training and certification in established trades — a way for people to obtain the credentials required for work in many important skilled trades. Apprenticeship is also a training model that combines on-the-job learning with the learning of theory. Aboriginal communities believe that this model is particularly suited to the ways in which they learn. Yet most Aboriginal people do not know a lot about apprenticeship, and their participation in Canada's apprenticeship system is limited.

The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects Steering Committee was formed to investigate and recommend approaches for increasing Aboriginal participation in the apprenticeable trades and occupations. The committee is a joint effort of the National Apprenticeship Committee (NAC) of the

Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB), the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA), Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs (IAABC). Its mission is to:

- increase Aboriginal participation in the apprenticeable trades and occupations;
- make the apprenticeable trades and occupations a viable career option for Canada's Aboriginal people;
- establish liaisons between Aboriginal people and the relevant provincial/territorial apprenticeship structures and people involved in apprenticeship;
- increase the capacity of the Aboriginal administrative and educational infrastructure to promote and deliver apprenticeship training.

The committee's first step has been to produce this report, which contains 36 recommendations and an action plan. We hope it will stimulate the establishment of new "apprenticeship partnerships" and the implementation of new initiatives and Aboriginal apprenticeship projects.

The steering committee wishes to especially express its appreciation to Mr Joe Miskokomon for chairing and facilitating its meetings. Joe's leadership and sound advice were instrumental in helping the committee successfully complete its work.

MEMBERS OF THE ABORIGINAL APPRENTICESHIP PROJECTS STEERING COMMITTEE

Kato Badry
Métis Training Initiatives

Lenore Burton
Canadian Labour Force Development Board

Mario Dagenais
Commission de développement des ressources humaines des Premières Nations du Québec

Lorna Docken
Dumont Technical Institute Inc.

Richard Edjericon
NWT Apprenticeship Board

Wayne Erasmus
ATCO Electric Ltd. (Interprovincial Association of Native Employment)

Harry Flaherty
Northwest Territories Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Board

Suzanne Hill/Evelyne Lemieux-Nault
Human Resources Partnerships Directorate
Human Resources Development Canada

Art Hoogland
Na-cho Ny'ak Dun First Nation

Bob Huget
Communications, Energy and Paperworks Union of Canada

Larry Macdonald
Black and McDonald Ltd.

Patrick MacDonnell
Manitoba General Employees' Union/NUPGE

Gordon McDevitt
Department of Education
Government of the Yukon Territory

Adrian McDonald
Mi'Kmaq Employment Training Secretariat

Rick Nielsen
Yukon Apprenticeship Advisory Board

Allan Okabe
British Columbia Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission

George Pellerin
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification
Saskatchewan Piping Industry Joint Training Board

Sarah Van Duzer
Apprenticeship Branch
Ontario Ministry of Training and Education

Wenda Watteyne
Aboriginal Liaison Directorate (ALD)

Robin Wortman
First Nations and Native American Business Development
PCL Construction Management

CONTENTS

Executive Summary i

Introduction 1
- The Apprenticeship "Information Gap" 2
- The Process 3
- The Method 4
- The Report 5

Chapter 1: The Apprenticeship System in Canada 7
- Apprenticeship in a Nutshell 7
- The Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program 8
- Apprenticeship as a Training Model 9
- Stepping through the Apprenticeship Process 11
- A Comparison of Registrations in Apprenticeship and the Labour Force 14
- The Clients 15
- Key Players in Apprenticeship 16
- Changing Circumstances 20
- Challenges to Apprenticeship Training Participation and Completion 22

Chapter 2: The Aboriginal Experience in Apprenticeship 25
- The Aboriginal Population (Indian, Metis and Inuit) 27
- Aboriginal Employment 30
- Aboriginal People in Trades and Apprenticeship 34
- The Apprenticeship Training Model and Aboriginal People 35
- Making Career Choices — Aboriginal Youth Experiences 36

Chapter 3: The Barriers to Apprenticeship Experienced by Aboriginal People 41
- Step 1 — Trades as a career 42
- Step 2 — Knowledge of skilled trades and apprenticeship 43
- Step 3 — Determine educational requirements 44
- Step 4 — Locate employer and apply for apprenticeship 45
- Step 5 — Get accepted into apprenticeship 46
- Step 6 — Fulfill all training requirements 47
- Step 7 — Pass certification examination 48

Chapter 4: Attempts to Overcome Apprenticeship Training Barriers: The Case Studies ... 49
Case Studies from the Private (For-profit) Sector ... 50
Case Studies from Government ... 51
Case Studies from Aboriginal Employment and Training Management Boards ... 52
Case Studies from Aboriginal Band or Community Initiatives ... 54
Case Studies from Partnership Organizations ... 56

Chapter 5: Our Findings: What Works and What Does Not Work ... 61
What Does Not Work ... 62
What Works in the Planning and Funding of Apprenticeship Training ... 64
What Works in Creating an Awareness of Employment in the Trades and Apprenticeship ... 65
What Works in Addressing Educational and Learning Disadvantages ... 67
What Works in Coordinating Apprenticeship, Technical and On-the-Job Training ... 68
What Works in Delivering Technical Training ... 69
What Works in Delivering the On-the-Job Training Component ... 70

Chapter 6: Our Recommendations ... 71
Roles and Responsibilities ... 72
Criteria for Success in Program or Project Delivery ... 72
Alternative or Additional Approaches in Apprenticeship Delivery to Meet Aboriginal Needs ... 74
Promoting Apprenticeship ... 75

Chapter 7: Next Steps ... 77
Our Perspective ... 77
Our Role ... 78

Appendix 1: Organizations or Individuals Who Contributed to the Study ... 81

Appendix 2: Trades included in the Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program ... 83

References ... 85

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canada's Aboriginal population is growing twice as fast as the non-Aboriginal population. Within the next 20 years, this emerging "baby boom" could become an economic success story or be the source of a problem.

Today's Aboriginal youth are tomorrow's workers and consumers. But they will need skills that are demanded in the workplace, opportunities and access to well-paying jobs. Currently, the average unemployment rate among Aboriginal people is double that among non-Aboriginal people. And their average income level is one-half to two-thirds that of non-Aboriginal people. Without significant job growth for Aboriginal people, the high levels of unemployment and poverty they now experience will remain unchanged and the baby boom will not become a success story.

Apprenticeship is a model of training that Aboriginal communities feel is particularly suited to the way their people learn. Yet most Aboriginal people do not know much about apprenticeship, and their participation in Canada's apprenticeship system is limited. In fact, their completion rates are disproportionately low.

Forecasts indicate that employment in the apprenticeable trades and occupations could constitute up to 5% of all employment for Aboriginal people. Apprenticeship training can help to reduce some of the employment disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal people. It is an area of job growth that cannot be overlooked.

The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects Steering Committee was formed in early 1998 to investigate and recommend approaches for increasing Aboriginal participation in the apprenticeable trades and occupations. The committee is a joint effort of the National Apprenticeship Committee of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB), the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs.

The committee's first priority was to assemble as much information as possible on apprenticeship and the Aboriginal experience in Canada. We asked Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups to tell us their "success stories" and to list the barriers they experienced and suggestions for overcoming them. A draft paper with some initial recommendations was circulated to more than 240 groups in the fall of 1998. This final report is based on feedback from that report and our further deliberations. It connects the best available statistical and descriptive evidence of the Aboriginal experience in apprenticeship training with ideas on how to improve the development of new policy, programs and projects. It provides a number of case studies and concludes with some effective practices for Aboriginal apprenticeships, described in a series of what works/what does not work statements and 36 recommendations.

Apprenticeship in a Nutshell

Apprenticeship is a system of training and certification in established trades — a way for people to learn while employed. It includes two parts: a formal technical training portion, normally taken at a college or private trade school, and on-the-job training.

Each province/territory administers its own apprenticeship program: it designates which trades are apprenticeable and establishes standards for training and certification in them. Forty-four trades are included in a Canada-wide Interprovincial Standards Program referred to as the Red Seal program.

Apprenticeship is a model for training that is:

- industry driven, meaning that training positions are created by industries needing skilled workers;
- employment-based in that the apprentice must find an employer (or group that acts as an employer) to hire him or her;
- guided by industry-developed and validated standards; and

- predominantly work-based, with 80% of total training being given on the job under the supervision of a qualified journeyperson.

Apprenticeship training requires:

- the apprentice, employer and provincial/territorial government to enter into an "apprenticeship agreement";
- apprentices to successfully complete trade examinations with contents developed and validated by industry for certification; and
- apprentices to take part in a technical training component that supports the work-based training, ensuring that apprentices have the theoretical knowledge they need.

Organizations at the community, provincial/territorial and federal levels play a role in apprenticeship. These include:

- Provincial/territorial government apprenticeship branches, which regulate and administer apprenticeship programs;
- Provincial/territorial trade advisory committees, which have legislative authority to develop training standards and provide an industry perspective on training and certification;
- Provincial/territorial apprenticeship boards, which have legislative authority to set standards and provide an industry perspective on apprenticeship programs and policies;
- The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, which develops national occupational standards, manages the Red Seal program and collaborates on apprenticeship and trade certification at the national level;
- Aboriginal human resources development agreements (formerly called RBAs)/ Aboriginal flexible funding arrangements, which develop and deliver a range of employment programs including apprenticeship projects and initiatives;
- The CLFDB's National Apprenticeship Committee which provides national labour market partners' perspectives on apprenticeship programs and policies;
- Joint apprenticeship committees, which indenture apprentices, arrange work experience and ensure that apprentices take the technical training portion, take on the responsibility of the "employer" and sign the "apprenticeship agreement" as the employer.

For the most part, people have to follow seven steps to enter apprenticeship and achieve journeyperson status. These include knowing the educational qualifications required to enter apprenticeship training and how to obtain these qualifications, knowing who hires apprentices and in which trades, fulfilling all of the training requirements and passing a certification examination. Aboriginal people encounter specific challenges at each step of the process.

The Aboriginal Experience in Employment and Apprenticeship

The most recent statistics show that:

- Unemployment levels are more than twice as high among Aboriginal people (24%) as among all Canadians (10%);
- The percentage of Aboriginal people with annual incomes of less than $10,000 is significantly higher than for Canadians as a whole;
- The Aboriginal labour force is heavily concentrated in the resource sector and in government/public administration;
- Over 40% of Aboriginal people live off a reserve and in an urban area, another 20% live in rural areas off reserve and more than 60% of Aboriginal people live in the south;
- Aboriginal youth, like their non-Aboriginal counterparts, do not participate in large numbers in apprenticeship.

This information leads us to draw some specific conclusions about Aboriginal employment and apprenticeship:

- Creating 300,000 jobs over the next 20 years or so, and having them filled by Aboriginal people (as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People reported would be required for Aboriginal employment levels to even begin to approach those of non-Aboriginal people) is a significant challenge given the economic growth forecasts for Canada and past employment patterns.
- Job growth needs to be diversified — with declining government resources, job creation in the public sector alone will not address the long-term employment needs of Aboriginal people any more than it will for non-Aboriginal people. New jobs are needed in private industry, particularly in manufacturing, construction and technology, especially to meet the demand for employment by Aboriginal youth.

- The skilled trades are and will be an important source of employment. Thus, increased participation in apprenticeship programs will be essential for Aboriginal people. Targeting reserves for job creation and individual skills development programs will help close the unemployment and income gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people given the disproportionately higher levels of unemployment among those on reserves.

- Aboriginal people need access to specifically-targeted resources to make sensible career decisions and undertake successful job searches.

Interestingly, the apprenticeship model of learning a trade has many similarities to the traditional means of passing on knowledge within Aboriginal society. Historically, shamans and medicine men or women took on young Aboriginal people to teach them the skills associated with these positions within the community. As with the current trades in today's marketplace, those who were chosen had to have exhibited both an interest and innate ability. In addition, because the training lasted many years, these people had to make a significant commitment to learning.

We found that some of the challenges experienced by Aboriginal people today in entering, participating in or completing apprenticeships include the following, among many others:

- parents of prospective apprentices are unfamiliar with the wage economy and the work skills required to find and keep employment;

- employment counsellors and teachers are not familiar with apprenticeship programs;

- the apprenticeship system is not seen as relevant to people in Aboriginal and northern communities;

- candidates have low levels of education and lack entrance requirements in some subjects;

- the number of apprenticeship positions varies over time making completion risky;

- Aboriginal people find it difficult to approach employers to find apprenticeable positions;

- there are not enough journeypersons in the northern communities to provide positions for apprentices;

- the apprenticeship system is culturally insensitive;

- taking technical training outside a community is a problem, especially for women;

- employers find on-the-job training hours required for apprentices to be excessive;

- examinations are culturally biased.

Our research also demonstrated that there are several ways of resolving each of these challenges, and these are illustrated in the case studies that form part of the report. For example, the Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects use Aboriginal role models as counsellors, employers, mentors and trainers and raise awareness about apprenticeship in this way. The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute has developed and delivered training and promotional materials targeted at specific communities and developed by Aboriginal people in an effort to demonstrate the opportunities offered through apprenticeship. The Eel River Crossing Apprenticeship Project has adjusted the ratio of journeypersons to apprentices, allowing journeypersons to take on more apprentices. And the Blood Indian First Nation Construction Ironworkers have tutored Aboriginal candidates to prepare them for written examinations in their trades.

It is important to remember that Aboriginal people are not a homogenous group. The barriers they experience in participating in and completing apprenticeship training are as diverse as their nations and circumstances. We found that, despite the best intentions, the following strategies *do not work:*

- a "one-size-fits-all" approach;

- centralized decision-making about program design, priorities and delivery mechanisms;

- developing projects or initiatives that focus only on the supply of skilled tradespeople rather than on the demand for people in skilled trades;

- designing and implementing projects without the participation of all the key players;

- implementing programs without also providing counselling and other supports;

- allowing only one means of assessing apprentice competency; and

- developing and implementing a program in the absence of complete information on the economic development and economic situation in a community or a region.

How then can Aboriginal people be encouraged to enter apprenticeships? First of all, the strategies must be designed and developed by Aboriginal people. Strategies aimed at youth must involve an alliance of caregivers, family, elders, community and peers. But the development of tools alone and the simplification of the road to and through apprenticeship will not suffice — although these should be major components of any strategy. Support in the form of culturally relevant counselling, child care and transportation expenses for Aboriginal people to find their way into and through apprenticeships is essential. Our recommendations are based on "what works" according to the contributors to this report and the historical evidence.

Our Recommendations

We believe that the challenge is one of connecting Aboriginal people with the jobs that exist now and will exist in the future in the apprenticeable trades and occupations. Aboriginal students and workers need to know more about apprenticeship training. Aboriginal organizations need to understand how to work with employers and unions to create opportunities for Aboriginal people to enter apprenticeship training. Employers and unions need to be aware of the barriers and challenges that often prevent Aboriginal people from entering or completing apprenticeships.

In our view, the apprenticeship system does *not* need to be revamped or changed in terms of legislation or regulations. New organizational structures are *not* required.

Although there are innovative partnerships, other *new Aboriginal apprenticeship partnerships* among employers, unions, government and Aboriginal groups at the community level must be formed. Aboriginal organizations formed or being formed to sign Aboriginal human resources development agreements are best situated to be instruments of change — to encourage the establishment of more apprenticeship partnerships.

Roles and Responsibilities

We recommend an apprenticeship planning and funding approach for Aboriginal people that:

1. is integrated with the planning and funding of economic development, infrastructure development, employment development and training projects;

2. uses funding from a variety of sources including Indian and Northern Development (IAND) core funding, IAND social services funding for employable clients, provincial/territorial employment and training programs, individual companies for private sector projects, HRDC funds provided through Aboriginal human resources development agreements;

3. where appropriate, involves a partnership arrangement among a regional Aboriginal organization; local community organizations; the provincial/territorial apprenticeship branch; provincial/territorial ministries of education, training and labour; a training provider (e.g., community college); employers and their organizations; and labour unions;

4. pools the resources of a number of communities to support apprenticeships;

5. is managed and led by Aboriginal organizations constituted under Aboriginal human resources development agreements (formerly RBAs) and given authority by band chiefs, even though the terms of agreement may be different for the different organizations (if possible, these organizations should be constituted from existing Aboriginal groups);

6. involves firm multiyear funding commitments for apprenticeship training and its administration;

7. contains a clear commitment by senior employer and union officials (accompanied by an action plan) to increasing the number of Aboriginal people successfully completing apprenticeships.

Criteria for Success in Program or Project Delivery

We recommend a program or project delivery approach where:

8. the development of apprenticeship training opportunities for Aboriginal people is focused on trades in demand in the community, including the Aboriginal community, and reflects the economic and business reality of the community;

9. mentors, coaches and trainers are identified at the outset of program delivery and, where possible, they are drawn from Aboriginal employers and journeypersons;

10. funding is provided to permit the hiring of an Aboriginal liaison officer who serves as the bridge between the apprentice, the community and the provincial and federal government departments, including the apprenticeship branches;

11. employment counselling programs are available to Aboriginal apprentices (these should be designed and delivered by Aboriginal people and should respect the way Aboriginal people seek and accept assistance with employment and other issues);

12. child care and transportation expenses are covered;

13. the formats for technical and on-the-job training are structured by Aboriginal people around the way they work and learn in a particular region;

14. adequate and sufficient work is provided to ensure that apprentices can complete all of the technical and on-the-job training within the usual 3-5 year period;

15. the technical training is provided in or near an apprentice's home community by establishing aboriginal apprenticeship training institutes that serve a number of communities or by accrediting community groups to deliver the training;

16. apprentices can be indentured to an Aboriginal group (that serves as the employer), which in turn contracts the apprentice out to various public- or private-sector employers;

17. a process is put in place to follow-up on and evaluate the outcomes of various apprenticeship training initiatives (at a minimum, all Aboriginal organizations involved in apprenticeship should maintain baseline information, such as number registered in each trade, where and when technical training is taken, name(s) of employer, etc.);

18. decisions on program/project design and delivery are made at the community level through a partnership of the Aboriginal organizations in the community and region, employers, unions, government departments and education and training organizations;

19. incentives and/or awards are offered to employers, unions or community groups for increasing the number of Aboriginal people who successfully complete apprenticeships;

20. a system exists for identifying and sharing information on effective Aboriginal apprenticeship practices;

21. cultural sensitivity is shown in the apprentice selection process, particularly in the selection interview.

Alternative or Additional Approaches in Apprenticeship Delivery to Meet Aboriginal Needs

Finding alternative ways of doing things does not mean disregarding standards. It does mean that individual or community differences are taken into account in reaching the same end result in apprenticeship — journeyperson status for people who meet all of the necessary job performance requirements of their trade.

We recommend the implementation, where needed and appropriate, of at least the following alternative approaches that help Aboriginal people reach journeyperson status:

22. promoting the awareness that people who have worked for the required hours in a trade, but have not formally registered as apprentices, can take the certification examination and be given journeyperson status if they succeed on the examination (this alternative would be used if candidates can be tutored in applying their trade knowledge on an examination);

23. using prior learning assessment to determine whether candidates have specific learning experiences that are equivalent to the prescribed educational requirements for entry into a trade;

24. providing potential apprentices with access to pre-apprenticeship or pre-trades qualifier training that may include upgrading in core academic areas;

25. providing Aboriginal secondary school students with the option of undertaking work experiences that are credited toward apprenticeships and secondary school completion;

26. expanding distance learning programs aimed at upgrading Aboriginal people in mathematics, sciences and language;

27. adjusting the standard journeyperson to apprentice ratio used for the on-the-job training to allow employers to take on more apprentices, where the training can be effectively given under the higher ratios;

28. developing alternative methods for giving examinations that retain the same standards for technical competency as the existing written examinations (e.g., giving examinations orally rather than requiring written ones, when requested).

Promoting Apprenticeship

We recognize that careers in the trades are often undervalued. Many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike place a higher value on the professions. In addition, a large proportion of our youth, their parents, employers and even school counsellors do not know that entry and progression in some key trades is through apprenticeship. Information about apprenticeships and the trades has to be communicated. But attitudes also need to change.

We recommend a systematic and sustained approach to bridging this information gap that:

29. targets groups such as workers (particularly youth), families, school counsellors and teachers, employers, unions and Aboriginal organizations;

30 involves the development and provision across the country of high-quality career materials focused on apprenticeship for youth and their families (e.g., materials such as videos, posters, games, pamphlets, TV specials, CD-ROM and various Internet products);

31. involves the preparation of career materials for use by school teachers, counsellors, Aboriginal workplace coordinators and Aboriginal mentors and coaches (these should attempt to overcome existing negative stereotypes and teach youth about the trades and apprenticeship, and what is needed to succeed in them);

32. contains materials designed by and specifically for Aboriginal people that can be used in local community information sessions, community newspapers and public information bulletins and job fairs to advertise apprenticeship opportunities;

33. supports the development of materials for Aboriginal elementary students, such as group activities and games that explain the value of apprenticeship and the trades;

34. involves the preparation of apprenticeship "marketing materials" for use by Aboriginal employment counsellors or liaison officers with employers (for example, pamphlets showing the "return on investment" when an employer hires and trains apprentices);

35. directly involves national and provincial organizations whose mandate includes the preparation and distribution of career materials, organizations such as the Canada Career Consortium, the Canada Career Information Partnerships and the Canada Career Information Association;

36. includes the introduction of an Aboriginal scholarships and bursaries program aimed at assisting Aboriginal youth to pay for the apprenticeship technical training and to provide financial support for travel and child care.

Next Steps

As the authors of this report, we do not intend that it sit on a shelf gathering dust. We will take action in three areas: advocacy, increasing awareness among Aboriginal people of apprenticeship training and promoting Aboriginal apprenticeship initiatives.

We will become advocates for increasing the number of Aboriginal people in apprenticeships — by seeking out opportunities to address diverse constituencies and government departments, presenting the key findings of this report to national Aboriginal organizations and identifying additional "champions" to assist us.

We will ask the Canada Career Consortium to produce more materials focusing on Aboriginal people in apprenticeship, and we will ask the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Sector Council to develop a plan for promoting Aboriginal apprenticeship training.

We challenge Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups to undertake initiatives aimed at increasing the number of new Aboriginal apprentices. We will ask the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship and the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs to establish a working group to publicize these initiatives, develop an incentive program and administer four pilot projects including two that will help identify role models, mentors and potential trainers and design an Aboriginal apprenticeship scholarship program.

INTRODUCTION

There are demographic, economic and equity reasons for focusing on any policy or program that deals with the training and employment of Aboriginal people. In terms of equity, Aboriginal people do not have, nor have they had, the same opportunities for gainful employment as non-Aboriginal Canadians. The reasons for this are both historical and geographic.

In terms of demographics, Canada's Aboriginal people are the fastest growing population group with an annual growth rate in excess of 5%. They currently represent some 4% of the population in Canada, and they are, on average, younger than the non-Aboriginal Canadian population.

At the economic level, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996) reported that the average unemployment rate of this group is double that of non-Aboriginal people. Income levels for Aboriginal people are one-half to two thirds those of non-Aboriginals. Aboriginal people have high levels of job attrition and low levels of labour force participation. And, on average, Aboriginal people have lower levels of education and fewer opportunities for educational advancement than non-Aboriginal people. If Canada is to grow economically, or even sustain its prosperity, then a real investment must be made in ways to address the employment disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal people.

Throughout this section, you will see a few real-life stories that illustrate the importance of apprenticeship to Aboriginal training and employment. They also show how important it is for employers, unions and governments to continue their strong commitment to apprenticeship training.

The Apprenticeship "Information Gap"

Apprenticeship training can help to reduce some of the employment disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal people. But a real "information gap" exists:

- Apprenticeship as a training system for skilled workers is not well understood by Canadians. This is also probably true for many Aboriginal people, including those involved in employment and training programs.
- The importance of the apprenticeship training system in the preparation of skilled Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers for our economy needs to be better recognized.
- The critical nature of youth unemployment in Canada and the rapid increase in the number of Aboriginal youth provides an opportunity for a better use of apprenticeship training in preparing people for work at higher skill levels.
- Aboriginal people have frequently suggested that apprenticeship training and the trades are particularly appropriate for employment development in their communities. But the participation of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship programs and their completion rates are disproportionately low.

Flexibility in applying the "rules"

For many years Joe was a backyard mechanic. He was brought to the Native Friendship Centre by a family member who wanted to invest in a business partnership with him. The dream of a family-owned business excited every member of the family. The family wanted Joe to become a licensed mechanic. The difficulty was that Joe was illiterate. Because one of the requirements for admission to apprenticeship as a motor vehicle mechanic is completion of at least grade 10, the Friendship Centre had to seek help from the provincial apprenticeship branch to make an exception for Joe.

The apprenticeship branch allowed Joe to register as an apprentice. The Friendship Centre enrolled Joe in a literacy program. But the need for exceptions did not stop there. Joe would be unable to succeed in the written certification examination without some help with the reading — even though he was acquiring all of the technical trade knowledge he needed. The apprenticeship branch allowed Joe to have a "reader" with him in the testing room. With the reader, Joe succeeded on the examination and eventually received certification. His business is off the ground, and he is still a participant in the Friendship Centre's literacy program.

- Serious questions are often raised about the validity of existing information on apprenticeship training and employment in the trades of Aboriginal people. Strong conclusions that can be used to drive program and policy changes have yet to be drawn from the existing information and research.

- Aboriginal people are not a homogeneous group. Barriers they experience that inhibit their participation in and completion of apprenticeship training are very diverse — as diverse as the nations and circumstances of Aboriginal people. Although innovative and successful approaches to improving Aboriginal peoples' participation in apprenticeship can be identified, care must be taken in applying the results to all Aboriginal people.

- A significant proportion of the available information on successful apprenticeship training and employment transition programs for Aboriginal people is anecdotal. Such information must be translated into quantifiable statistical evidence.

The Process

The steering committee first met in May 1998. We realized that a majority of Aboriginal people, including many members of the committee, knew little about apprenticeship. And information was lacking on Aboriginal experience in the apprenticeship system.

Our first priority was to assemble as much information as possible on apprenticeship and the Aboriginal experience in Canada. A call went out to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups to tell us their "success stories." Groups were also asked to list the barriers to participation experienced by Aboriginal people and to provide suggestions for overcoming these barriers.

We drafted a discussion paper containing some initial recommendations and circulated it to more than 240 groups late in the fall of 1998. This final report is based on the feedback we received and our further deliberations.

We believe this report will only be useful if it can *objectively* present the case for an investment in measures directed at increasing Aboriginal participation in and completion of apprenticeship training. It presents viable policy, program and project options based on the evidence gathered during our research and liaison work.

The Method

Although this does not constitute academic research, all of the objectivity, thoroughness and rigours of good research procedures were applied in preparing this report. The aim was to gather information for all Aboriginal groups — Inuit, Metis, those living on and off reserves, in both rural and urban settings. Preparation of the report was carried out in five steps.

Step 1: Establishment of baseline data

All available sources of data on apprenticeship participation and completion were tapped (1996 Census, *Labour Force Survey, Survey of Labour Income and Dynamics*, provincial apprenticeship branch statistics). In addition, any available surveys and studies of Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship and job preparation programs were reviewed. Additional information was collected through a survey of organizations contacted by the Aboriginal Liaison Directorate. Organizations that responded to this additional polling for information are listed in Appendix 1.

Step 2: Review of program and project information

Aboriginal communities were asked to provide information on specific policy, program and project initiatives related to Aboriginal people in apprenticeship. A template was developed by the steering committee for this purpose. This information, along with the *baseline data*, was used to identify barriers to Aboriginal participation and completion of apprenticeship training. It also served as the primary means of identifying methods or approaches for overcoming various barriers.

Step 3: Interpretation and analysis of information

The *baseline data* were matched against the *program and project information* to ensure that all of the barriers evident in the statistical (quantitative) information were, as much as possible, related to policy, program and project examples. In addition, the *program and project information* collected using the template was supplemented by information from interviews with people involved in program and project delivery to Aboriginal people. Members of the steering committee contributed greatly in their discussions, drawing on their own experiences. The interviews and committee members' contributions were used to fill gaps in the information initially gathered using the template. People and organizations contacted are listed in Appendix 1. In the end, a table was constructed to summarize the barriers (or challenges) and methods that have been tried to address the challenges.

Step 4: Summary of what works and what does not work

From the table of challenges and methods used to address them, a series of statements was drafted. These were categorized by key areas of activity and used to capture the essence of what people said helped Aboriginal people get into and complete apprenticeships.

Step 5: Development of recommendations

We posed the question, "What has to change in order for apprenticeship to become a viable training option for Aboriginal people?" From the statements about what works and what does not work, a number of themes became evident. Using those statements as a starting point, we developed some initial recommendations. These draft recommendations were discussed by all the interested players, then the final recommendations were drafted.

Step 6: Action planning

We were determined not to have our recommendations turn to dust on a shelf. As a final step, we developed an action plan listing next steps. Although this final report provides an exit point for the committee as a formal body, the work of its members as *champions* of Aboriginal apprenticeship training goes on.

The Report

Presenting information, whether it is statistical or descriptive, only becomes a useful process when it is set in the context of recommendations, suggestions or options for consideration. That is one function of this report — it connects the best available evidence with ideas on how to improve the development of new policy, programs or projects.

Chapter 1 contains a detailed description of the apprenticeship system in Canada. It shows how people get into and complete apprenticeship training. A brief statistical picture of apprenticeships across Canada is presented, and many of the challenges to apprenticeship entry and completion faced by people from all backgrounds are cited.

A little help from a counsellor

Angie is a young mother of three. She is also a recovering alcoholic. Angie felt her life was slipping away. While she had access to services in the Alcohol and Drug Program at a local Friendship Centre, she spoke to a counsellor about becoming a hairdresser. That trade requires a period of apprenticeship. And to enter an apprenticeship, Angie had to find an employer who would hire her — a difficult task given her addiction.

The Friendship Centre found an employer willing to hire Angie — one who was also a recovering alcoholic. Angie has since come a long way in overcoming her alcohol problem. She is a contributing member of society, who continues to fulfill her apprenticeship obligations by completing the required number of hours of work experience. She will soon write the certification examination.

In Chapter 2, the great diversity of the Aboriginal population and workforce in Canada is illustrated. Information on the participation of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship training is presented. Some possible approaches to guiding Aboriginal youth into apprenticeship training are explored.

Chapter 3 lists many of the challenges to apprenticeship entry and completion faced by Aboriginal people.

Chapter 4 describes the barriers to apprenticeship entry and completion that were derived from case studies and other descriptions provided by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups and individuals. The case studies are included in this section.

The report concludes with some *effective practices* for Aboriginal apprenticeships, described in a series of "what works/what does not work" statements. The statements were derived from the evidence provided in the case studies and the statistical and other information outlined in earlier sections of the report. Our recommendations were distilled from these statements. Finally, we outline some steps the committee intends to take.

We plan to distribute this report widely to give Aboriginal groups a better understanding of apprenticeship training. We hope it will prove useful to Aboriginal groups in establishing approaches to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people in such training.

A good start but government pulled the rug out

An example of a good approach to aboriginal access to apprenticeship can be found in the work of NAAdMAAdWiiuk, the Algoma Area Management Board in Ontario. Until recently, the board had an apprenticeship coordinator on staff. Her work enabled youth to get solid information on the programs available, the process to be followed, the key players (including potential employers) and the challenges they would face.

Apprenticeship participation and completion rates for the area were very high. But when the Province of Ontario cut many employment programs, the apprenticeship coordinator's position was lost. The system broke down, and misinformation became the norm. People entering apprenticeship programs did not fully understand the system nor the expectations. Today, the Aboriginal youth of the area know little about apprenticeship and have minimal chances of success in the program.

1 THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN CANADA

Apprenticeship in a Nutshell

Apprenticeship is a model for training in an occupation. In Canada, "apprenticeship" refers specifically to training and certification in established trades. Each province/territory administers its own apprenticeship program and establishes the trades to which it applies. The training and certification process is governed by standards. There are 44 trades (listed in Appendix 2) that are included in a Canada-wide Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program. Each province/territory has other designated (apprenticeship) trades that are specific to the province/territory or a region of the country.

Apprenticeship training generally means learning a skilled trade while employed. It includes two parts: a formal technical training portion, normally taken at a college or private trade school, and on-the-job training. For some trades, part of the technical training is now offered to secondary school students. But apprenticeship formally begins only after an employer hires an apprentice. The apprentice, employer and provincial/territorial government enter into an "apprenticeship agreement," which sets out the responsibilities and obligations of each party, the period of training and the credits awarded for previous experience or formal training.

The apprentice works in the trade, learns on the job under the supervision of a qualified *journeyperson* and acquires trade knowledge and skills through specified technical training. In all provinces/territories, the apprentice either takes a certification examination at the end of a period of apprenticeship, typically lasting 3 or 4 years, or takes examinations at the end of specific technical training modules. There are a few trades in some provinces/territories where the writing of a certification examination

is not required. The apprentice becomes a journeyperson on completion of the on-the-job time and all technical training and successful completion of the examination(s).

Apprenticeships are largely found in the service, manufacturing and construction sectors. They are available in all of the traditional trades such as electrician, automotive service technician and cook, as well as such trades as tool and die maker. New apprenticeships have also been developed in leading-edge technical occupations such as micro-electronics, manufacturing, petrochemical processing and telecommunications, as well as service-sector occupations such as hotel/motel management and film industry occupations.

The Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program

The provinces and territories have legislative responsibility for apprenticeship. Each has an Act giving the province/territory the authority to designate apprenticeable trades and to establish standards for training and certification in those trades. This means that Canada has, in reality, 12 apprenticeship systems. The qualifications of tradespeople who are trained in one province or territory are not always recognized in another. This lack of mobility is one reason why the Interprovincial Standards Program (ISP) or Red Seal Program was set up. ISP endorsement is affixed to a provincial/territorial certificate of qualification signifying the attainment of interprovincial status.

Obtaining the Red Seal

To obtain interprovincial qualification in an ISP trade, a person must:

- either complete a recognized provincial/territorial apprenticeship program or obtain a journeyperson's certificate from the province/territory; and
- pass an interprovincial standard examination (Red Seal examination) in the trade. Some provinces and territories use the ISP examination only. Others, like Ontario and Alberta, have their own process for certification. Apprentices in these provinces may choose to write the ISP examination in addition to obtaining provincial certification.

Use of the Red Seal

Once a person receives a Red Seal on their journeyperson papers, he or she may practice anywhere in Canada where that trade is designated as a Red Seal trade without having to write further trade examinations or undertake additional training. This clearly increases the mobility of journeypersons in these trades.

Interprovincial Training Standards

National occupational standards are available for the ISP trades and may be used as the basis for designing training standards, but provinces and territories are free to set their own training standards even for the ISP trades. Thus, uniform apprenticeship training standards do not exist across the country, even for the ISP trades.

Governance of the ISP

The federal government, provinces and territories have given the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) the authority to work with industry to establish certification standards for the ISP trades. The CCDA consists of the directors of apprenticeship from all provinces/territories along with two representatives from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

Apprenticeship as a Training Model

The apprenticeship system in Canada cannot be described as an entry-level training program. First, apprentices must be employed to be registered as apprentices. They must find an apprenticeship position with an employer, or group such as a Joint Apprenticeship Committee that serves as the employer, then begin the training. In essence, apprenticeships are a means for workers to move from low-skilled positions to higher-skilled positions. Many registered apprentices begin their trade work as an apprentice helper. Consequently, apprentices tend to be older than other job trainees (median age of 21 years).

The Training Model

Apprenticeship is characterized as follows:

- It is industry driven, meaning that training positions are created by industries needing skilled workers.
- It is employment-based in that the apprentice must find an employer (or group that acts as employer) to hire him or her. The apprentice enters into an *apprenticeship agreement* with the employer (or group acting as the employer) and the province/territory.
- Training is guided by industry-developed and validated standards.
- Trade examinations having contents developed and validated by industry must be successfully completed for certification (in almost all provinces/territories and for most trades).

- Training is predominantly work-based, with 80% of total training given on the job under the supervision of a *journeyperson*.

- Technical training supports the work-based training, supplying apprentices with the theoretical knowledge they need. This accounts for 20% of total apprenticeship training.

High School Apprenticeships

Some provinces/territories have introduced high school apprenticeship programs. The aim is to help young people begin to move into the apprenticeable trades even before finishing high school. In this way, the apprenticeship training model has become a part of the school-to-work transition system in Canada. High school apprenticeships work as follows:

- The programs are a cooperative endeavour of provincial/territorial apprenticeship branches, school boards and industry.

- Students in high school register as apprentices and follow a program that includes on-the- job training in the summers and/or some portion of their time during the school year.

- Students continue their apprenticeships after high school graduation until they complete all the required technical and on-the-job training for the trade.

- For the on-the-job portion of the apprenticeship, student apprentices must still be hired by an employer and are paid wages while on the job.

Pre-apprenticeship Training

During pre-apprenticeship, the person takes training before registering as an apprentice. When the training is completed, students who want to continue in the trade must find an employer to hire them. If they find a job and become registered apprentices, they receive credits for the training and are entitled to advanced standing for their program of study. Pre-apprenticeship training usually follows high school graduation and is often college-based.

Stepping Through the Apprenticeship Process

Although the apprenticeship system in Canada is not an entry-level training program, high school apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs are helping young people make the transition into apprenticeships. They are helping open the apprenticeship system to the first-time labour force entrant. The provinces and territories are considering a variety of other approaches to increase participation in apprenticeship training. But for the most part, people have to walk through various common steps to find their way into apprenticeship and to achieve journeyperson status (Figure 1).

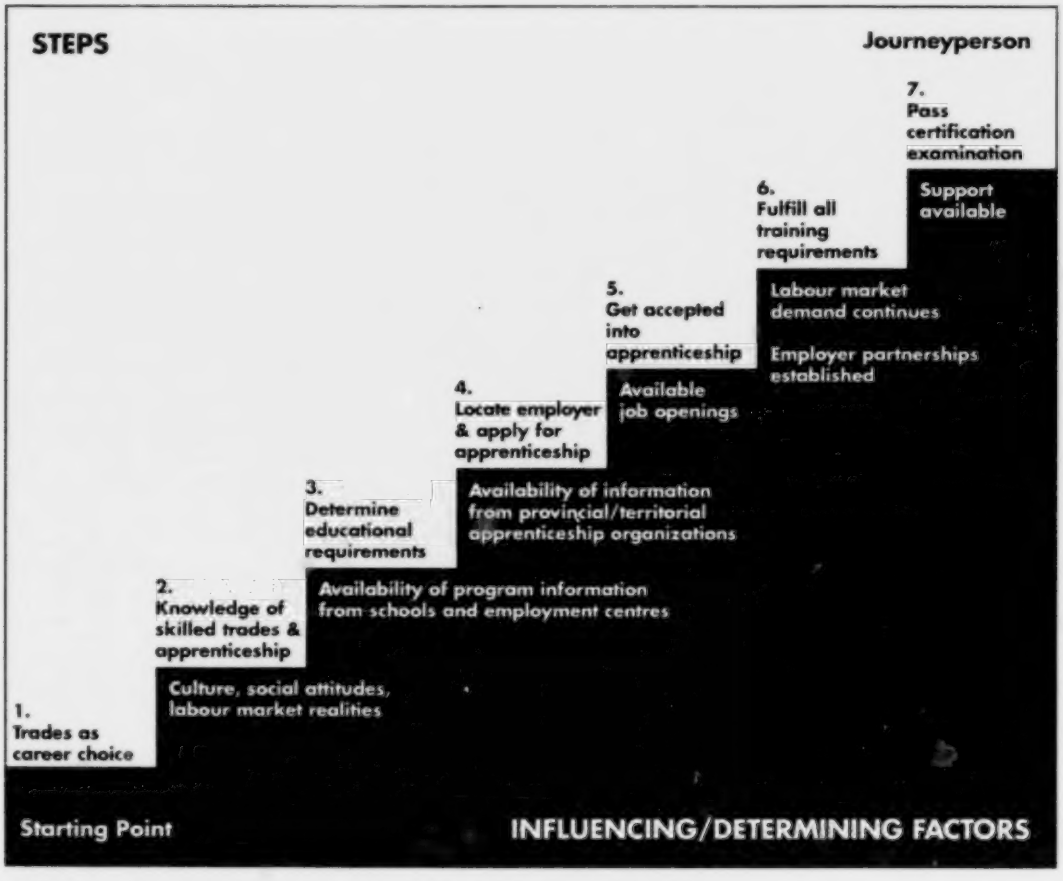

STEPS
Journeyperson
7. Pass certification examination
Support available
6. Fulfill all training requirements
Labour market demand continues
5. Get accepted into apprenticeship
Employer partnerships established
Available job openings
4. Locate employer & apply for apprenticeship
Availability of information from provincial/territorial apprenticeship organizations
3. Determine educational requirements
Availability of program information from schools and employment centres
2. Knowledge of skilled trades & apprenticeship
Culture, social attitudes, labour market realities
1. Trades as career choice
Starting Point
INFLUENCING/DETERMINING FACTORS

Figure 1. The Steps to Journey-Level Status in Apprenticeship

Step 1: The person must see the trades as an appropriate and realistic career choice

The choice of a career is influenced by culture, social attitudes and labour market realities. Work roles are understood in terms of social class, geography, age, gender, race and religion. For example, until recent years, women did not see themselves working in many of the apprenticeable trades, particularly in automotive services and construction. Some parts of our society perceive employment in the professions as the first choice of people and work in the trades as a choice made only if one cannot get into a profession.

Social attitudes about who does what kinds of work, expressed by parents and other family members, probably exert one of the strongest influences on career choice. Seeing people like themselves working in the trades can lead people to consider entering a trade.

A second and equally important factor in career choice is the labour market reality associated with a particular career. Factors that can and should influence a person's choice of work area include the availability of work opportunities, possibilities for advancement and job security and financial prospects in a trade.

Step 2: The person has to be knowledgeable about the skilled trades and know that entry to them is through apprenticeship

Once employed as an apprentice helper in a trade, information about apprenticeship and the requirements to obtain journeyperson status is available at least through "word of mouth." For students in high school or young people working in general labour positions, information about apprenticeship is not readily found. It is available, but most young people do not know where to look for it. Much more information is easily discovered about careers requiring a college or university education.

Step 3: The person must find out what educational qualifications are needed to enter apprenticeship training and how to obtain the qualifications if he or she does not have them already

Each trade has its own educational requirements. To register as an apprentice, a person may have to upgrade his or her general level of education or take specific courses in mathematics, sciences and language. The technical trades require a minimum of secondary school completion. Finding out where to take upgrading courses, getting into the education programs and having the financial means to follow through will all determine whether or not a person can even consider trying to register as an apprentice.

Step 4: The person must know where to apply to enter apprenticeship, who hires apprentices and in which trades

To register as an apprentice following the traditional route, the person must find a job with an employer who is ready to sign an apprenticeship agreement. Looking for apprenticeship openings is exactly like looking for any other job, but with the added complication of finding out what trades are apprenticeable and which employers hire and train apprentices.

Step 5: The person has to be accepted into apprenticeship

Once the person has identified the trades that are apprenticeable and has located employers that hire apprentices, he or she must get a position with an employer and register with the provincial/territorial government's apprenticeship branch. Even when labour market conditions are good and employers need skilled workers, not all employers are ready to hire an apprentice and provide the on-the-job training that is needed. Often not enough employer partnerships exist.

Step 6: The apprentice must fulfill all of the training requirements

Apprentices must complete the specified work experience (on-the-job component of the training). This can take up to 4 years or longer depending on the industry, trade and availability of continuous work. Apprentices must be employed for the total time required with an employer(s) who participates in the system. And they have to complete all of the technical training, often taken in blocks of 6 to 8 weeks at a college or private trade school. Financial constraints may prevent some from taking the technical training at the appropriate time. Labour market conditions sometimes affect the employer's ability to continue to provide a registered apprentice with a position and broad-based work in the trade.

Step 7: The apprentice has to pass a certification examination

Completion of apprenticeship training includes the passing of an examination in almost all provinces/territories and in most trades. Taking and succeeding on an examination is always a challenge.

A brief overview of apprenticeships in Canada follows, including the number of registrations, the proportion of the labour force working in apprenticeable trades and identification of the clients.

A Comparison of Registrations in Apprenticeship and the Labour Force

Table 1 shows the total registrations in apprenticeships across Canada for selected years. It contains the labour force statistics (total employed) for the same years. This table:

- shows the contribution of apprenticeships to the total employment in Canada (i.e., indicates the proportion of total employment made up of people in any year of their apprenticeship training);
- gives an indication of the change in contribution over time (i.e., addresses the issue of whether more or fewer people are taking apprenticeship training over the years as a proportion of those employed).

Table 1. Apprenticeship registrations and employed labour force (selected years)

Year	Total no. registrations (all trades)	Total no. employed (thousands)	Registrations as % of total employment
1984	102 729	11 402	0.9
1988	128 831	12 819	1.0
1992	139 744	12 842	1.1
1996	132 189	13 676	1.0

Source: Statistics Canada.

Over a 12-year period, apprenticeship registrations have remained fairly constant as a percentage of total employment.

Table 2 shows the number of apprenticeship registrations for 1996 by selected major trade. Three trades (carpenter, automotive service technician and construction electrician) accounted for almost 35% of all registered apprentices in Canada. These figures demonstrate that a significant proportion of all apprenticeship training occurs in only a few occupational areas (construction, manufacturing and services) and in relatively few individual occupations.

Table 2. Apprenticeship registrations in selected major trades (1996)

Selected trade	No. registrations	% of total registrations
Construction electrician	15 490	11.7
Carpenter	15 267	11.6
Automotive service technician	14 260	10.8
Industrial mechanic (millwright)	5 297	4.0
Steamfitter/pipefitter	5 214	3.9
Cook	5 196	3.9
Industrial electrician	5 106	3.9
Plumber	4 579	3.5
Welder	4 272	3.2
All other trades *	57 508	43.5
Total registrations	132 189	100.0

* Fewer than 4000 registrants in each trade.
Source: Statistics Canada.

The Clients

The Guilds of Old

Apprenticeships are as old as the trades themselves. Originally, apprentices or their families paid a journeyperson to take them on and teach them the trade. Apprentices were indentured, meaning they had a binding agreement to work for their journeyperson for a set period of time. Many apprentices began their period of work and training at a very young age — sometimes as young as 12 years.

The European Experience

In some European countries, such as Germany, youth enter their apprenticeship at 16 years of age and have acquired all the necessary skills to begin work as journeypersons by age 20. Theirs is a high school youth program. In contrast, the Canadian apprenticeship system is largely a part of the adult learning system, with the median age of an apprentice being 21 years.

Impact of Population Changes on Apprenticeship

At one time, employers could readily find young people who already had work experience to enter an apprenticeship position. In the 1970s, they could choose from a large pool of "post-war baby boomers." But in the 1990s, the number of young people entering the labour force is declining. We can expect that, if things do not change, fewer and fewer 18 to 24 year olds will be available to enter apprenticeship. At the same time, most of

the baby boomers, who now make up a significant proportion of tradespeople will be retiring over the next decade. Yet the demand for skilled people will likely remain high well into the next century.

Also, workers from the designated employment equity groups (women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities and people with disabilities) currently make up over 50% of the labour force, yet only represent a small percentage of apprentices and journeypersons. And the fastest growing group of new labour market entrants, our new group of "baby boomers" — Aboriginal people — have a disproportionately small representation in apprenticeship.

One can conclude that our ability to meet the demand for skilled workers in the future will be greatly affected by our ability to improve the participation of Aboriginal people in the apprenticeship system.

Key Players in Apprenticeship

The success of apprenticeship in Canada depends on the formation and maintenance of effective partnerships. Each apprentice's agreement is a partnership between the employer (or group acting as the employer), the apprentice and the provincial/territorial apprenticeship branch. The participation and cooperation of these groups, as well as a technical training provider, is needed to:

- develop the technical and on-the-job training content;
- determine appropriate training methods;
- recruit apprentices;
- plan and implement improvements to the system.

Key organizations with an interest in apprenticeship range from the federal to provincial to local community level. They are in the public and private sectors, in the for-profit and the not- for-profit sectors. Historically, the lead bodies in apprenticeship are the provincial government apprenticeship branches. At the pan-Canadian level, the lead body is the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship. **But the system is essentially driven by employers and labour unions.** A brief picture of who is involved in the *delivery* of apprenticeship training is given in Figure 2.

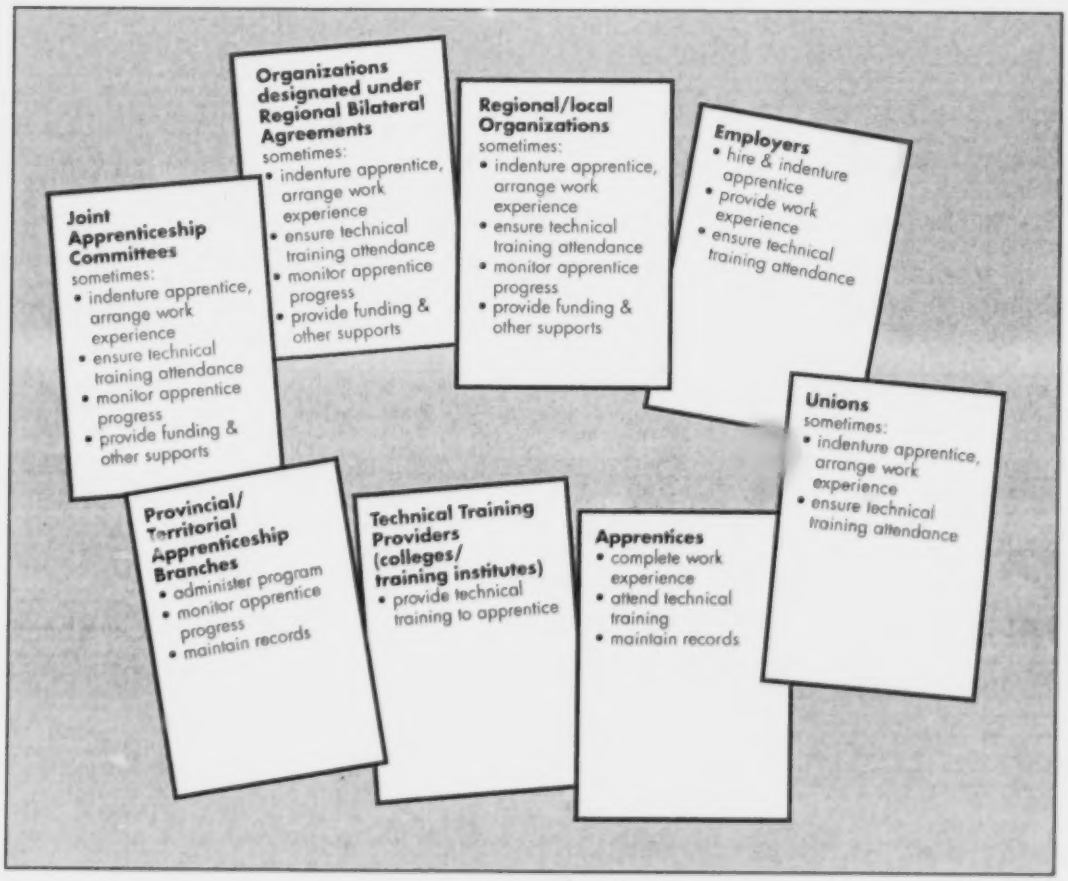

Organizations designated under Regional Bilateral Agreements
sometimes:
• indenture apprentice, arrange work experience
• ensure technical training attendance
• monitor apprentice progress
• provide funding & other supports
Regional/local Organizations
sometimes:
• indenture apprentice, arrange work experience
• ensure technical training attendance
• monitor apprentice progress
• provide funding & other supports
Employers
• hire & indenture apprentice
• provide work experience
• ensure technical training attendance
Joint Apprenticeship Committees
sometimes:
• indenture apprentice, arrange work experience
• ensure technical training attendance
• monitor apprentice progress
• provide funding & other supports
Unions
sometimes:
• indenture apprentice, arrange work experience
• ensure technical training attendance
Provincial/ Territorial Apprenticeship Branches
• administer program
• monitor apprentice progress
• maintain records
Technical Training Providers (colleges/ training institutes)
• provide technical training to apprentice
Apprentices
• complete work experience
• attend technical training
• maintain records

Figure 2. Key Players in the Delivery of Apprenticeship Training Programs

The federal government works in apprenticeship through HRDC. Apprenticeship and Aboriginal peoples' issues are now, and will be even more so in the future, dealt with through the regional bilateral agreements.

In Table 3, we provide a succinct summary of the roles of the key **organizational players** in apprenticeship responsible for planning, funding, coordination and administration.

Table 3. Key organizations involved in apprenticeship

	Private-sector partnership organizations				
	Provincial/ territorial apprenticeship boards	**Provincial/ territorial trade advisory committees**	**CLFDB National Apprenticeship Committee**	**Industrial adjustment services committees**	**Sector councils**
Composition	partnership between employers and employees	partnership between employers and employees	partnership between business, labour, equity and education and training	partnership between business and labour	partnership between various sector stakeholders
Mandate	provincial legislative authority to set training standards and to provide an industry perspective on apprenticeship programs and policies	provincial legislative authority to develop training standards and to provide industry trade perspective on training and certification in specific trades	provide national labour market partners perspective on apprenticeship programs, policies; promote national standards and expansion of apprenticeship	develop and implement human resource plans including apprenticeship for individual trades	develop and implement human resource plans including apprenticeship for individual sectors
Activities	set standards for apprenticeship training and provide advice on apprenticeship programs and policies through network of provincial trade advisory committees	develop standards for apprenticeship training and provide advice on technical training content, trade certification examination; define ratio of apprentices to journeypersons	provide national advice on apprenticeship related issues — in form of discussion papers; coordinating symposia, committees and working groups	develop national occupational and skill set standards, and training curriculum	develop national occupational and skill set standards, and training curriculum

Source: CLFDB (1997).

	Regional/local organizations		Government		
	Regional bilateral agreements — Aboriginal flexible funding arrangements	**Joint apprenticeship indenture committees**	**Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship**	**Provincial/ territorial government apprenticeship branch**	
Composition	regional or local organizations representing Aboriginal people (Inuit, Metis, First Nations)	regional or local organizations with representation usually from employers, unions and other community groups	directors of apprenticeship from all provinces and territories, and federal government	provincial employees — key person is director of apprenticeship programs	
Mandate	develop and deliver a range of employment programs to help unemployed Aboriginal people return to work (includes employment counselling and apprenticeship)	indenture apprentices ensuring apprentice receives all required work experience and attends technical training (acts as employer for purposes of the "apprenticeship agreement")	develop national occupational standards, expand Red Seal Program, improve mobility of journeypersons (done in collaboration with HRDC)	regulate and administer apprenticeship programs	
Activities	negotiate and administer contribution agreements, develop and deliver re-employment programs specific to the needs of Aboriginal people, deliver HRDC employment programs, employment counselling	sign "apprenticeship agreements" as "employer," arrange work experience placements with employers, review apprentices' progress, maintain apprenticeship documents for apprentices, ensure apprentices attend technical training	coordinate and maintain Red Seal Program, the Interprovincial Computerized Examination Management System and national occupational standards	administer entry to apprenticeship training, set standards, provide advice on labour market issues, examination, accreditation and occupational certification	

Changing Circumstances

In the Canadian economy, the demand for higher levels of skills is increasing. Most occupations now have a technology component. Continuous updating of workers' skills sets is necessary, and workers are more mobile than ever before. They need to be able to have their qualifications recognized no matter where they go in Canada.

All levels of government face significant fiscal pressures. They have recognized the importance of prioritizing their programs and services. Different levels of government are assuming some different responsibilities in addressing labour force and training issues. Much of the responsibility for labour market programs and services has moved from the federal to the provincial/territorial level. New federal legislation has altered the funding arrangements for apprenticeship. The most important changes that affect the apprenticeship system include the following.

Funding Support for Apprenticeship

Overall, there has been a reduction in total dollar transfers to provinces under the Canada Health and Social Transfer arrangement. At the same time, the funding available for education, training and employment is diminished as demand for health care remains high within provinces/territories.

By the year 2000, the federal government will no longer purchase places in training courses directly from the provinces/territories. It is uncertain how much of the previous funding levels can be met by the provinces and territories. The provision of the technical component of apprenticeship training could be affected.

Income support for apprentices taking technical training at colleges or private trade schools is less than before. For Employment Insurance (EI) eligible apprentices, the two-week waiting period applicable to all EI recipients applies. For non-EI eligible apprentices, there will no longer be any income support provided directly by the federal government. Support must come from provincial programs or other bilateral agreements (such as under the regional bilateral agreements for Aboriginal people).

Federal-Provincial/Territorial Agreements on Labour Force Development

The federal government has negotiated agreements with the provinces and territories to transfer responsibility for most aspects of labour force development to them. The arrangements will be somewhat different for each province and territory. The delivery systems for employment services will change. Some provinces/territories, such as Alberta and New Brunswick, are putting in place provincial employment centres where services such as employment counselling, the provision of labour market information and information on employment training programs including apprenticeship are being provided. The continued funding and operation of many community-based partnership initiatives supported by HRDC is not assured.

The Agreement for Internal Trade (AIT)

In 1994 the first ministers signed the AIT which aims to reduce barriers to the interprovincial movement of workers, goods, services and capital. Chapter 7 of the agreement deals with labour mobility. As part of the agreement, the federal government and provinces/territories are committed to ensuring that workers qualified for work in one jurisdiction can work in any jurisdiction. The Red Seal is cited in Chapter 7 as the primary standard for mobility in the regulated trades.

Impact of Technology and Changing Business Skills Requirements

Technological change is exerting a dramatic influence on apprenticeship training in two ways. First, there is a shift from the traditional semi-skilled occupations to those that have an increasing reliance on technology. Business and industry are addressing this change by either upgrading the skill requirements for existing trades or by seeking the establishment of new trades, some of which might be good candidates for use of the apprenticeship training model.

Second, employers, governments, colleges and nongovernment organizations are all exploring the use of technology for the delivery of the technical portion of apprenticeship training. Currently, most apprentices must attend a college or private trade school to acquire this training. This increases the need for income support previously provided by HRDC. Distance learning and computer-based learning approaches can make the theoretical portions of apprenticeship training more accessible to many apprentices.

Almost every industry wants its workers to possess the "employability skills" described a few years ago by the Conference Board of Canada. These are skills such as problem solving, flexibility, and decision-making. Apprenticeship training must include development in these skill areas as well.

Challenges to Apprenticeship Training Participation and Completion

We have looked at the many challenges that inhibit entry to or completion of apprenticeships. Some apply to only one group of clients or another, while some are common to all. In Table 4, we attempt to summarize the most commonly cited challenges. The contents of the table were derived from the references at the end of this report and the organizations and individuals listed in Appendix 1.

Table 4. Summary of challenges to apprenticeship training and participation

Challenges	Approaches used to meet the challenges
Unfamiliarity with the trades/ negative attitudes toward employment in the trades	• Videos on trades for use in school guidance program • Training of school counsellors and teachers on trades and careers as journeypersons • Promotional programs conducted by apprenticeship branches and colleges • Employer presentations at job fairs and in schools • High school apprenticeship programs
Lack of knowledge about apprenticeship training program and entry requirements	• Training of school counsellors and teachers • Information on apprenticeship entry available at guidance offices and in employment centres
Low levels of education and lack of entrance requirements in specific subjects	• College and school board upgrading programs and pre-apprenticeship training programs • High school apprenticeship programs
Lack of recognition of training and previous work experience	• Prior learning assessment (PLA) approaches used by colleges and some provincial apprenticeship branches • Foreign credential procedures adopted in some provinces
Stereotyping and cultural barriers to work in trades.	• Development of "role models" in specific trades (e.g. women in carpentry) • Trades and apprenticeship "bridging programs"
Lack of apprenticeship positions with employers	• Development of provincial apprenticeship branch and employer partnerships • Apprenticeship advocacy by industry through trade advisory boards and apprenticeship boards
Lack of availability of child care and other supports	• Financial support provided under EI Act and through federal government CRF support (possibly replaced by provincial programs)
Technical language barriers and learning styles	• Adoption by colleges of alternative learning approaches for technical training (e.g., computer-based individual learning programs)

Table 4 continued

Challenges	Approaches used to meet the challenges
Loss of apprenticeship position with employer due to shortage of work	• Accumulation of hours of on-the-job apprenticeship training across different employers
Insufficient earnings to complete the in-school training	• Under old Unemployment Insurance (UI) Act, federal government used its C.F. funds to provide income support during the two week waiting period before UI income replacement commenced. Provinces/territories to provide income support during the two week waiting period before EI income replacement begins under new EI Act. • Under new federal-provincial agreements, provinces/territories to provide income support during technical training for non-EI eligible apprentices. • Mixture of grants and loans from the province/territory may be used for income support and to pay course costs.

2 THE ABORIGINAL EXPERIENCE IN APPRENTICESHIP

Of the 811,400 Aboriginal Canadians cited in the 1996 Statistics Canada Census:

- 53% are under the age of 25 years, compared with 34% of all Canadians;
- 45% are under the age of 20 years, compared with 27% of all Canadians;
- 18% are between 15 and 24 years of age, compared with 13.5% of all Canadians;
- their average age is 25.5 years, compared with 35.4 years for all Canadians;
- only 30% of those aged 18 to 20 years graduated from high school, compared with 63% of all Canadians.

We also know that:

- Canada's Aboriginal population is growing at twice the rate of non-Aboriginal people.
- The number of entrants to the Aboriginal workforce will increase by 75% over the next 20 years. This increase will not be evenly distributed across the provinces/territories or across regions of a province or territory.
- An estimated 95% of Aboriginal youth will not attend university and will either enter the labour force after secondary school completion (or less) or after completing a college program.

- Aboriginal youth, like their non-Aboriginal counterparts, do not participate in large numbers in apprenticeship. Our statistics on Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship are somewhat lacking. However, it is evident from data reported by many Aboriginal organizations that the majority of their youth do not know a lot about the skilled trades and apprenticeship programs. More importantly, Aboriginal youth view the trades in a positive light unlike many non-Aboriginal youth.

- The Aboriginal labour force is heavily concentrated in the resource sector and in government/public administration. Diversification in employment will be needed over the next few years to meet the demand for employment by Aboriginal youth.

- Large-scale job creation for Aboriginal people is necessary to reduce the extraordinarily high levels of unemployment. Demand for skilled tradespersons will likely remain strong over the next 20–25 years. The skilled trades are and will be an important source of employment for Aboriginal people.

Apprenticeship is a training model that focuses on combining on-the-job learning with the learning of theory. It involves learning under the direction of a qualified tradesperson (journeyperson). A relationship is established between the apprentice and the journeyperson. This model of learning a trade is very much like the traditional means of passing on knowledge within Aboriginal society. Aboriginal communities have said that employment in the trades and apprenticeships are particularly well suited to their people. We need to capitalize on this positive attitude toward apprenticeship among Aboriginal people.

It is important to look at the experiences of Aboriginal youth who are in the process of trying to get a foothold in employment:

- What do they know about the trades?

- What is their perception of apprenticeship? Do they even know apprenticeship exists?

- What happens to Aboriginal youth during each of the seven steps to journeyperson status that we described in Chapter 1?

In this chapter, we describe the experience of Aboriginal people with apprenticeship in two ways. First, we present a statistical picture based on a small amount of information available from Statistics Canada, information contained in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* and anecdotal information provided by numerous Aboriginal organizations. Second, we summarize some research findings about Aboriginal people and their workforce transitions.

The Aboriginal Population (Indian, Metis and Inuit)

Information Sources and the Identification of Aboriginal People

In the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* (1996), the Royal Commission noted that Aboriginal population figures vary depending on the data source. In the 1991 Census, Statistics Canada determined ancestry or cultural origins based on a specific question in the census; the result was a total of one million Aboriginal people. The 1991 *Aboriginal Peoples Survey* (APS), also conducted by Statistics Canada, focused on those who *identified* with their Aboriginal ancestry; a figure of 626,000 resulted.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People preferred the APS approach, and asked Statistics Canada to estimate population figures for 1996 based on the APS statistics. The issue of identification as an Aboriginal person is important, because all estimates based on it will tend to be low. Metis population estimates are particularly prone to underestimation because of the wording of the "Aboriginal identification" question, even using the APS approach.

The Population by Group

The Royal Commission report contains estimates of the Aboriginal population broken down by group and region. Figure 3 shows 1996 estimates from Statistics Canada for population by Aboriginal group (North American Indian, Inuit and Metis). We use the term North American Indian rather than First Nations when different categories of people are referred to in statistical tables and the related discussion.

The total Aboriginal population in 1996 was estimated to be 811,400. The total in Figure 3 is slightly larger because of double counting; for example, some people reported themselves to be both North American Indian (First Nations) and Metis.

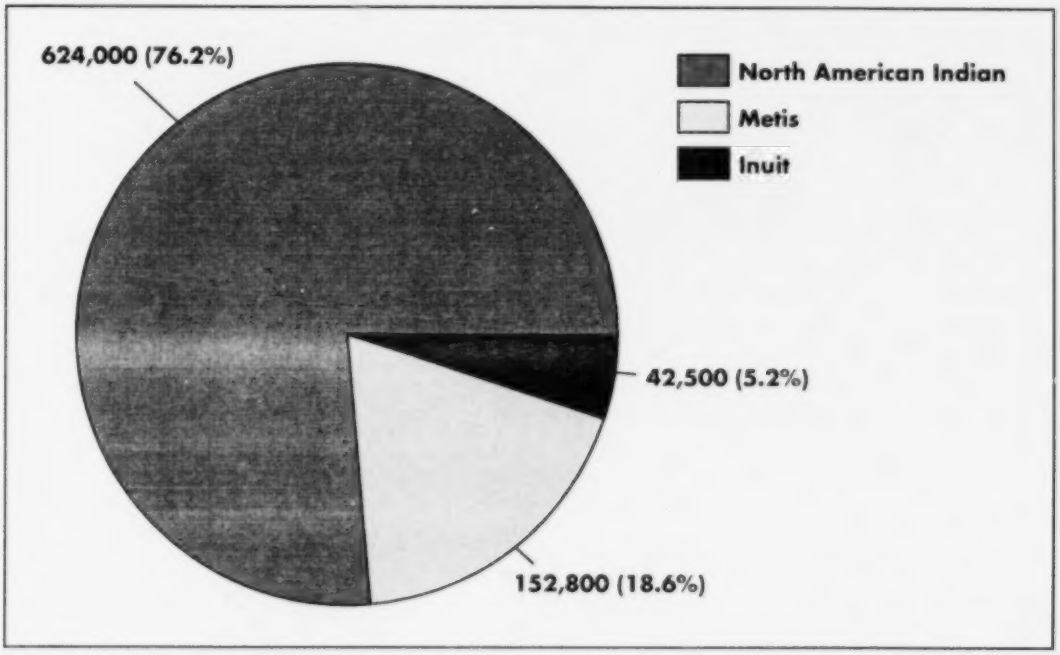


Figure 3. Estimated Aboriginal Population by Group (1996)

Table 5 shows the proportions of Aboriginal people on and off reserves, in urban and rural areas in 1991 compared with the proportions of non-Aboriginal people living in urban and rural areas. "Urban" is defined by Statistics Canada as locations within the "Census Metropolitan Areas."

Table 5. Residency of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations for 1991 (as %)

	Registered North American Indian	Non-registered North American Indian	Metis	Inuit	Total Aboriginal	Total non-Aboriginal
Urban, non-reserve (%)	33.9	69.0	64.6	21.9	44.4	77.2
Rural, non-reserve (%)	8.0	31.0	35.4	78.1	20.3	22.8
Reserve (%)	58.1	—	—	—	35.3	—
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996).

Table 6 shows the population distribution by zone of residence (far north, mid-north and south[1]). This information is pertinent to our discussion of the employment and unemployment situation.

Table 6. Distribution of the Aboriginal population (%) by zone of residence

Zone of residence	Registered North American Indian	Non-registered North American Indian	Metis	Inuit	Total Aboriginal
Far north	5.9	2.1	4.5	88.8	9.7
Mid-north	32.2	17.4	25.0	0.8	26.4
Reserve	20.7	1.7	2.0	0.1	12.4
Non-reserve	11.6	15.7	22.9	0.8	14.0
South	61.8	80.5	70.5	10.3	63.9
Reserve	24.5	1.5	0.6	0.1	14.2
Non-reserve	37.3	79.0	69.9	10.3	49.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996).

We can see from these figures that:

- over 40% of Aboriginal people live off a reserve and in an urban area (Table 5);
- another 20% of Aboriginal people live in rural areas off reserves (Table 5);
- more than 60% of Aboriginal people live in the south (Table 6).

Because of the numbers living off reserves and in the cities of the south, many Aboriginal people will have little choice but to work in an urban area and likely in a non-Aboriginal workplace. They encounter many of the same obstacles to entering apprenticeship as do non-Aboriginal people, and they turn to some of the same sources of help in making career decisions or undertaking a job search.

[1] The Royal Commission report defined these regions as follows: the far north consists of the Yukon, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador; the mid-north consists of the northern portions of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario and a zone in Quebec consisting of Abitibi-Témiscamingue in the west to the North Shore in the east; the south consists of the remainder of the provinces not included in the two northern zones and all of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the island of Newfoundland.

Aboriginal people are very diverse in terms of culture, ancestry and geographic location. Looking at the population distribution by Aboriginal group and by zone of residence, it is evident that large proportions of the various groups live in very different circumstances. We can conclude that:

- employment programs and services that may be good for First Nations people living in the south might be much less useful in helping the Inuit job seeker find work in the far north;
- generic ("one size fits all") economic development and employment policies and programs are not now, and perhaps never were, the solution to the enterprise development, employment and social difficulties encountered by such a diverse group of people.

Aboriginal Employment

Participation, Employment, Unemployment and Income Levels

The employment and income levels of Aboriginal people (by group) in relation to total Canadian income and employment levels are shown in Figure 4 (1991 figures). It should be noted that 1991 was the first year of an economic recession in Canada, and the data reflect the general economic condition in that year. However, our purpose is to contrast the employment and income situations of Aboriginal people with that of all Canadians. The fact that 1991 was a recessionary year does not substantially alter the difference in employment and income levels for Aboriginal people compared with all Canadians.

We see that:

- labour force participation is significantly lower among Aboriginal people (57%) than for Canadians as a whole (67%);
- unemployment levels are more than twice as high among Aboriginal people (24%) as among all Canadians (10%);
- the percentage of Aboriginal people with an annual income less than $10,000 is significantly higher than for Canadians as a whole;
- North American Indians on reserves have the lowest employment levels.

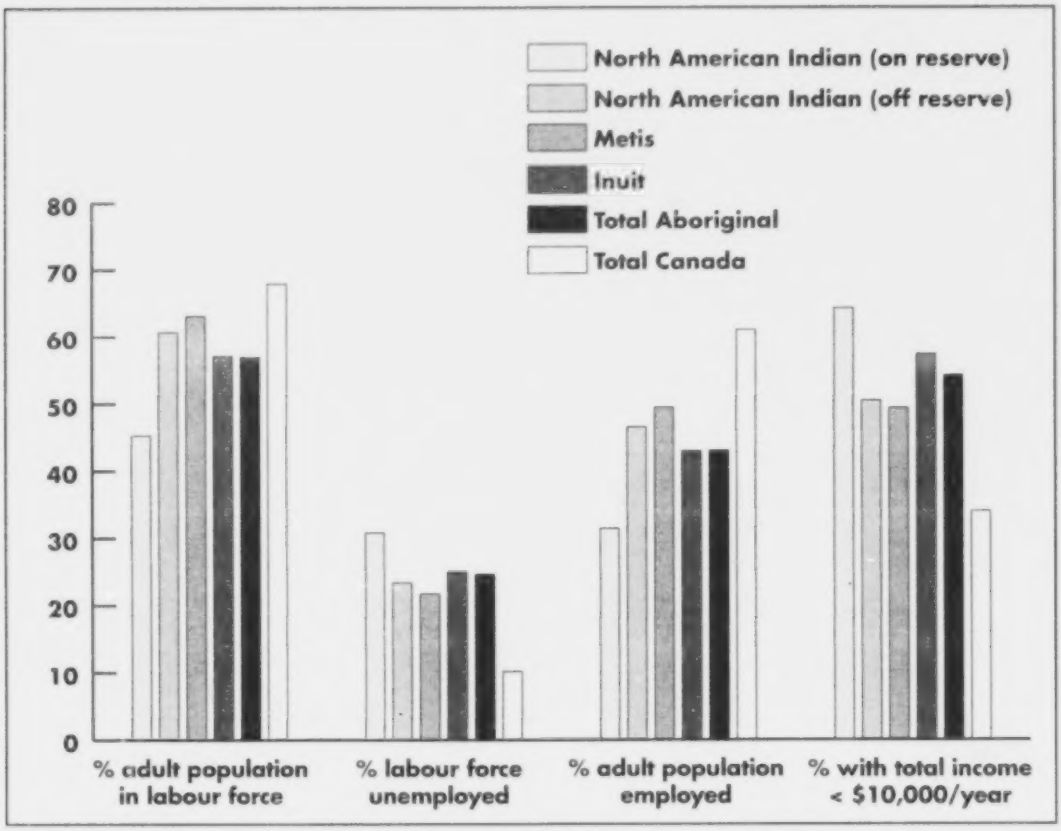


Figure 4. Labour Force Statistics: Aboriginal People & Total Population (1991)

Note: Statistics Canada defines "unemployed" as people without work, but who are looking for work. Many Aboriginal people give up looking for work when none seems available; they are not counted as "unemployed." Thus, the above figures are underestimates of the actual percentage of unemployed Aboriginal people.
Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996).

Employment levels and incomes of Aboriginal people lag far behind those of non-Aboriginal Canadians, and the Aboriginal population is growing. In its report, the Royal Commission estimated that more than 300,000 jobs would have to be created in the Canadian economy and be filled by Aboriginal people in the period 1991 to 2016 to have Aboriginal employment levels even begin to approach those of non-Aboriginal people. Creating that many jobs and filling them with Aboriginal people is a significant challenge given the economic growth forecasts for Canada and past employment patterns.

Where Aboriginal People Are Employed

The type of jobs created is as important as the total number of openings. With declining government resources, the creation of jobs in the public sector will not address the long-term employment needs of Aboriginal people any more than it can for non-Aboriginal people. At the moment, Aboriginal jobs are overrepresented (as a proportion of total Aboriginal employment) in government services. This includes various forms of government and public administration (including local Aboriginal government). However, Aboriginal people remain underrepresented in the Public Service of Canada. Employment by industry sector for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in 1991 is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7. Aboriginal employment by industry sector in 1991 (as % of total employment for each group)

	North American Indian on reserve	North American Indian off reserve	Metis	Inuit	Total Aboriginal	Total non-Aboriginal
Primary industry	7.9	5.4	8.0	4.6	6.5	6.0
Manufacturing	8.1	13.1	9.4	5.2	10.7	14.4
Government services	29.2	9.6	11.3	24.2	15.1	7.8
Education and health services	17.7	14.8	14.7	17.7	15.8	15.4
Other tertiary industry	37.1	57.1	56.6	48.1	51.9	56.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996).

Unemployment: The Age and Gender Factors

The 1991 unemployment levels by age group for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are shown in Figure 5. We see that:

- unemployment was highest in 1991 for young (15–24 years) male North American Indians followed by young male Inuit;
- young female North American Indians also fared poorly.

The situation in 1996–98 in terms of who has the greater share of unemployment has changed slightly with an expected increase in the relative proportion of unemployed among young female North American Indians.

Unemployment was a problem all across Canada in 1991. It was even more of a problem for Aboriginal people. By all estimates, the situation has not changed substantially since 1991 in terms of the disproportionately high unemployment levels of Aboriginal people.

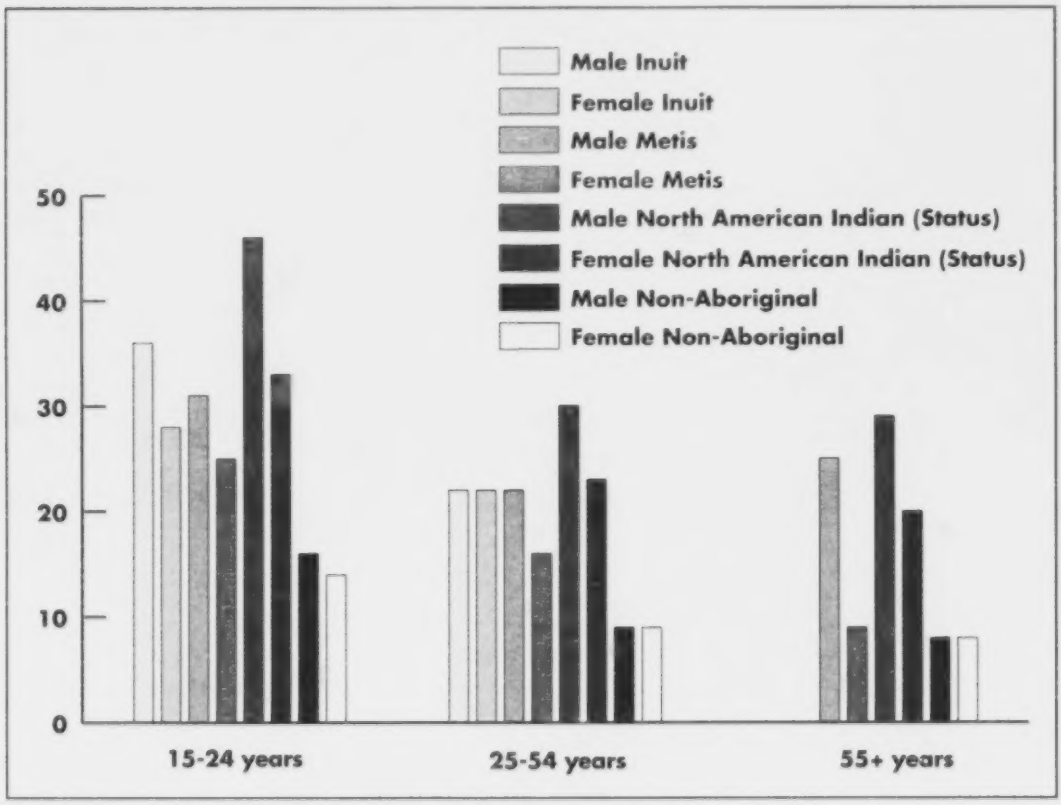


Figure 5. Unemployment Rates (%) by Age & Gender (1991)

Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996).

Unemployment: On and Off Reserves

From the information illustrated in Figure 6, it is clear that in 1991 labour force participation rate and employment rate were lowest and level of unemployment was highest among Aboriginal people on reserves. Targeting reserves for job creation and individual skills development programs will help close the employment and income gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

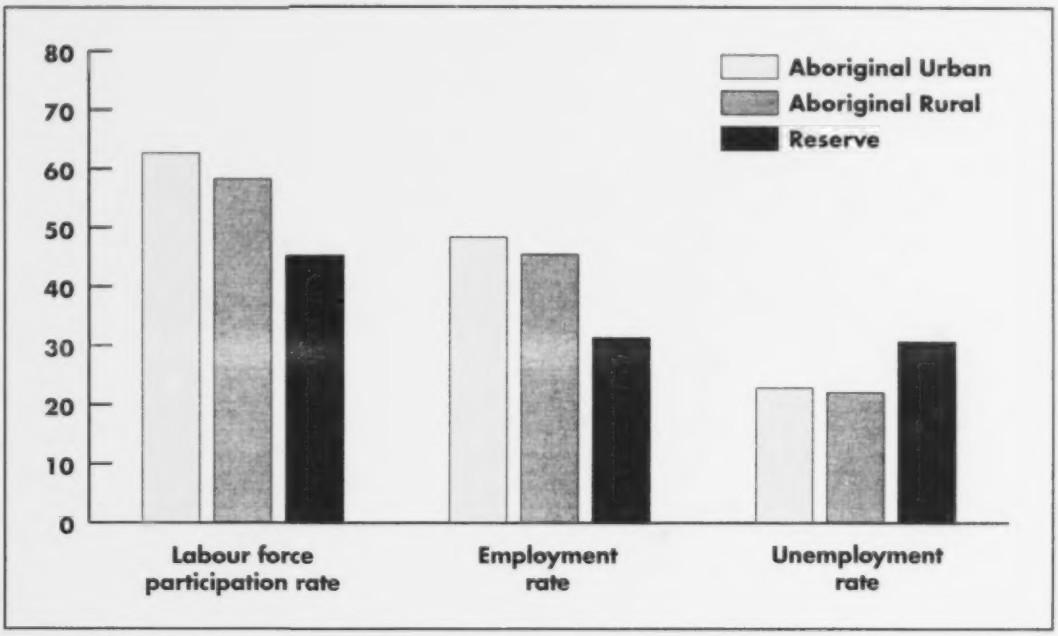


Figure 6. Labour Force Activity (%) among Aboriginal People (1991)

Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996).

Aboriginal People in Trades and Apprenticeship

Statistics Canada collects information on the numbers of people, including the number of Aboriginal people 15 years and over, employed in the more than 600 occupational groups. A sampling of the employment levels among Aboriginal people and other Canadians in some of the trades highlighted in Table 2 is presented in Table 8.

Statistics on the participation of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship training are not collected by either Statistics Canada or the apprenticeship branches of the provinces and territories. As part of the background work for the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects Steering Committee, the Aboriginal Liaison Directorate asked its 220 contacts to provide information on apprenticeship participation. However, the information gathered to date was insufficient to present a statistical picture of Aboriginal participation in apprenticeships across the country.

Table 8. Number of Aboriginal people compared with all Canadian workers employed in major apprenticeable trades (1991)

Trade	Number Aboriginal	% of total Aboriginal employment*	Number workers (all Canada)	% of total Canada employment
Cook	9 300	2.1	194 795	1.5
Carpenter	8 290	1.9	121 750	0.9
Automotive service technician	4 300	1.0	154 100	1.2
Welder	2 805	0.7	75 955	0.6
Barber and hairdresser	2 315	0.5	92 310	0.7
Pipefitter and plumber	1 770	0.4	48 720	0.4
Painter	1 680	0.4	37 065	0.3
Construction electrician	1 595	0.4	55 090	0.4
Total	32 055	7.5	735 785	5.7

* Total Aboriginal employment = 433,725.

Source: Statistics Canada.

We see that:

- The proportions of the Aboriginal workforce employed in the seven most populated trades are very similar to the proportions of all Canadians employed in those trades.
- A larger proportion of Aboriginal people tend to be employed as cooks and carpenters than is the case among all Canadians.
- Although the proportions working in the seven trades are similar, a higher percentage of Aboriginal tradespeople do not have their journeyperson certificates (according to Aboriginal groups that contributed to this research).

The Apprenticeship Training Model and Aboriginal People

The apprenticeship model of learning a trade has many similarities to the traditional means of passing on knowledge within Aboriginal society. Historically, shamans and medicine men or women took on young Aboriginal people to teach them the skills associated with these positions within the community. As with the current trades in today's marketplace, those who were chosen for these apprenticeship positions had to have exhibited both an interest and an innate ability. In addition, because the training lasted many years, these people had to make a significant commitment to learning.

The deep roots of the apprenticeship approach to learning in Aboriginal culture and history has been apparent not only in how Aboriginal people learn from their elders and skilled individuals, but also in how they helped non-Aboriginal people learn to live and prosper in North America. For example, the early explorers were patiently instructed in the building of methods of conveyance and temporary and more permanent shelter. Without the canoe, the travois, the toboggan and effective dwellings, it is unlikely that the early arrivals would have survived one winter.

The explorers had to learn how to use new materials and tools to fashion objects that were soundly engineered to function in the harshest of environments. The sheer variety of these products illustrates the industriousness and artistry of Aboriginal "tradespeople." The variety of canoes and kayaks, suited to the unique demands of the environments in which they were used and the ability of Aboriginal craftspeople to impart this knowledge to the explorers and traders, underscored their penchant for the apprenticeship model.

Historically, toolmaking has been looked upon as a highly prized gift. The sharing of this gift was a natural tradition among Aboriginal peoples — among themselves and with the early explorers. Needles were fashioned from bones, threads from roots and sinews, buttons from stones and straps from rawhide. Knives and scrapers were devised from shale and obsidion, combs from fishbones and wool carding combs from teasel cones.

Aboriginal people were, and are, "specialists" in the whole area of foods, medicines and the use of a myriad of plants that enhance well-being and good health. They willingly taught their pharmacology to traders and explorers.

The apprenticeship (mentoring) model has been applied in almost all sectors of the traditional Aboriginal community — crafts, hunting, farming, sewing, story-telling and canoe-building. Although there was no formal schooling, education was direct and involved hands-on learning. You learned by doing.

Making Career Choices — Aboriginal Youth Experiences

Impact of Population Diversity

Career planning and development of Aboriginal young people is greatly affected by the amazing diversity of circumstances in which they live. This is a population with more than 50 languages and hundreds of dialects. Most youth also function in English or French. They might live in considerable isolation in the north, in the interior or in an urban setting vastly removed from their cultural anchors and support. They live within the bosom of both healthy and dysfunctional families and communities.

They have the benefit of the wisdom of elders and they live on the streets victimized by the worst extremes of racism. They attend schools whose staff often lack sensitivity to Aboriginal culture and needs. Such diversity makes it difficult to prescribe the best means of meeting the career development needs of Aboriginal youth.

Career Development Services for Aboriginal Youth

Numerous institutions in Canada are attempting to serve First Nations and other Aboriginal youth; for example, the Anishinabek Career Centres in North Bay and Thunder Bay, Ontario. The counsellors in these centres travel throughout northern Ontario visiting some 50 remote communities. They take information and material to encourage and promote career development, and they are well versed in the unique needs of their clients.

At the other end of the scale, we find young people in both urban and isolated settings who have no support whatsoever in terms of planning their future. Most urban areas have Friendship Centres with varying degrees of support and services for youth. But many isolated communities lack even the most basic career development services for youth. They are fully occupied in dealing with such severe economic challenges that little attention can be paid to the development of youth career services.

Career Fairs and Career Development Events

One promising initiative is the increased number of Aboriginal career fairs being held. For example, the National Capital Region has had three such fairs — in 1993, 1995 and 1997 — each attracting 5000 youth and their caregivers, and another is planned for the fall of 1999. The theme for these fairs is *Tomorrow... a journey of two paths*. Culture workshops are interwoven with career development sessions to promote this important message. John Kim Bell organizes two career fairs a year across Canada in conjunction with the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Other parts of Canada have successfully adopted this approach, most notably Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

The merging of career development and culture workshops is successful because of the emphasis on traditional community values. Working together, career development specialists, elders and role models can achieve long lasting and rewarding outcomes. At a recent fair held at Science North in North Bay, Ontario, an elder spoke eloquently of the need for Aboriginal skilled tradespeople in all areas to promote a solid infrastructure of roads, housing and services. This is a departure from the traditional endorsement of university as the road to real success.

Developing a Career Planning Model for Aboriginal Youth

The rationale for developing a culturally relevant life/work planning model for Aboriginal people has been described in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People in Canada. The labour force growth in Aboriginal communities is very high due to the birth rate (56% of Aboriginal people are under 24 years of age). Shortages of trained Aboriginal workers exist across the spectrum of Canada's industry/business sectors including the trades and technical areas. Despite this, the vast majority of Aboriginal youth do not finish high school, but exit without the credentials needed for jobs in either the mainstream economy or their home communities.

Motivating youth to complete their education is of paramount importance to the economic well-being of Aboriginal communities. Having solid career goals is a fundamental motivator for Aboriginal youth to complete their basic education and enter postsecondary training of some sort.

What the Research Suggests

Herring (1990) points out that there is limited research on career decision-making among First Nations youth. He also comments on their lack of career awareness and criticizes the culturally encapsulated counselling techniques used by mainstream counsellors working with Aboriginal youth. Similarly, Axelson (1993) states that career development models are based on generalizations from "middle-class and white male populations." Krebs, Hurlburt and Schwartz (1988) describe career counselling strategies that focus on increasing counsellors' sensitivity, enhancing Aboriginal students' self-concepts, decreasing gender differences and stereotypes, emphasizing Aboriginal role models and facilitating work opportunities. Cheek (1984) mentions that there are certain career areas that Aboriginal clients tend not to enter due to perceived career stereotypes. Lee (1984) found that parental influence has a greater impact on the career choice of Aboriginal students than among white students and also that many did not expect to reach their occupational goals.

Developing Aboriginal-Specific Career Planning Models

Dr Rod McCormick, a Mohawk who is director of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program at the First Nations House of Learning at the University of British Columbia, is investigating suicide and healing strategies as identified by Aboriginal youth in Canada. He points out that the cultural and social structure has been stressed, weakened or nearly eradicated in many Aboriginal families and communities. Youth, as well as entire communities, are left without clearly established values, beliefs and traditions. This likely has a profound effect on the development of identity in Aboriginal youth (Hotchkiren and Jilek 1985).

Research showing that more traditional tribes have lower rates of suicides and other mental health indicators supports the notion of the importance of cultural values and traditional practices to community health (Berlin 1987; Cooper et al. 1991). In the larger sense, any interventions to increase the access of Aboriginal youth to apprenticeship programs must be culturally sensitive to have the best chance for success.

Developmental Issues Faced by Aboriginal Youth

Aboriginal youth, like other young people, are busy working on developmental tasks or transitions on their way to adulthood. These tasks can be very stressful. To help Aboriginal youth, who are already burdened by considerable challenges, we must be even more aware of the developmental issues confronting them and remain sensitive to them as we explore ways to assist these young people. Some of these issues include the following:

- Emerging into adulthood: Youth between 12 and 16 undergo tremendous changes and development. Embedded in these changes are changing expectations of others and themselves.

- Developing individuality: The question "who am I?" is foremost in the minds of young people. This includes exploration of interests, values, aptitudes, relationships with others and integration of past with present and future expectations.

- Searching for meaning: Youth wonder how they can contribute to the world around them, how they can give back to their communities and how they can become more responsible members. At this stage of development, their need to understand how meaning is achieved through work, spirituality, community contributions, significant relationships and personal success can be used to demonstrate the positive route that pursuing an apprenticeship can provide.

- Evaluating values: Beliefs arise from the influence of family and community. For many Aboriginal youth, these influences are in a state of change and transition — merging traditional values and contemporary life. This must be kept in mind when developing strategies for promoting particular career paths. Due to these fluctuations in traditional influences, youth tend to rely on their peers for information about values. This is particularly challenging if their peers share an aversion to apprenticeship or are simply uninformed, as most are.

When all of this is considered, we see the great challenge of finding meaningful and successful ways to reach Aboriginal youth and help them develop realistic and positive career plans. It is clear that career development approaches must involve an alliance of caregivers, family, elders, community and peers. The development of tools alone and simplification of the road to and through apprenticeship will not suffice — although these things should be major components of any strategy. Support in the form of culturally relevant counselling, child care and transportation expenses for Aboriginal people to find their way into and through apprenticeships is essential.

3 THE BARRIERS TO APPRENTICESHIP EXPERIENCED BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

In Chapter 1, we used the term "challenges" instead of barriers. We see these as problems that can be solved, *not* as permanent obstacles. In Table 4, we listed a number of challenges to participation or completion of apprenticeships that are similar for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Our purpose in this chapter is to summarize the challenges to apprenticeship participation and completion faced by Aboriginal people, including the common challenges already discussed. We also describe approaches that have been or are being used by Aboriginal people to meet the challenges. These "challenge resolution approaches" are derived mainly from the more than 21 case studies provided to us by Aboriginal organizations, individuals and the apprenticeship branches. They are presented in more detail in Chapter 4.

Challenges must be addressed in the right sequence. People have to believe that the trades offer good employment prospects and know about apprenticeship before even considering registering as an apprentice. Therefore, we used the seven steps to journeyperson status as a means to organize the "challenges" and "challenge resolution approaches." For many of the challenges and resolution approaches, we refer to the case studies in Chapter 4; these are indicated with an asterisk (*). Additional examples are cited where a particular resolution approach is being used but a full case study was not provided.

Step 1 — Trades as a career

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Parents of prospective apprentices are unfamiliar with the wage economy and the work skills required to find and keep employment	Use of Aboriginal role models as counsellors, employers, mentors and trainers	• Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects* • White Sands First Nations Employment Counselling Services
Youth lack an awareness of the possibilities in skilled trades	Videos, brochures, posters, photos showing trades employment opportunities featuring Aboriginal people; community newspapers, circulars	• HRDC; Sir Sanford Fleming College • *The Anishinabek News* (Union of Ontario Indians) • Kahtou (BC) • Sir Sanford Fleming College
School staff have negative attitudes toward trades relative to professions	Targeted recruitment of Aboriginal people for the trades by colleges Native services teams	• Sir Sanford Fleming College

Step 2 — Knowledge of skilled trades and apprenticeship

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Employment counsellors and teachers are not familiar with the apprenticeship program	Familiarization training of counsellors and teachers in apprenticeship program; using Aboriginal apprenticeship liaison officers	• White Sands First Nations Employment Counselling Services • Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin AMB*
	Apprenticeship materials included in school guidance programs	• Nishnawbe-Aski Nation* • Saskatchewan's Making a Connection with the Workplace*
Apprenticeship system is not seen as relevant to people in Aboriginal and northern communities; Aboriginal people do not trust what they are told by non-Aboriginal people	Delivery of apprenticeship training in the communities, so local workers, employers, and residents become familiar with it	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute*
	Development and delivery of training and promotional materials by Aboriginal and northern community people	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute* • Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
	Supervised work experiences in communities for school students that provide credit toward apprenticeships; hiring of Aboriginal workplace coordinators by schools	• Saskatchewan's Making a Connection with the Workplace*

Step 3 — Determine educational requirements

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Candidates have low levels of education and lack entrance requirements in some subjects	Pre-trades qualifier program that includes academic upgrading	• Yukon Government Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects*
	Academic upgrading in specific areas (e.g., math) as part of pre-apprenticeship courses offered by Aboriginal organizations or colleges	• Pictou Landing First Nations Women's Carpenter Program* • Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin AMB* • Nishnawbe-Aski Nation* • Yukon Government Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects*
	Waiving of normal educational prerequisite if candidate can succeed without it	• Eel River Crossing Apprenticeship Project*
	Financial support for people to take upgrading at regular schools or colleges before applying	• Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects*
	More basic trades courses in secondary school and opportunities for work placements in apprenticeable trades	• Saskatchewan's Making a Connection with the Workplace* • Nishnawbe-Aski Nation*
	System of prior learning assessment to determine if requirements are met other than through formal courses in schools	• Pictou Landing First Nations Women's Carpenter Program* • Metis Management Centre in Winnipeg*
Candidates lack necessary learning skills	Specific government-funded program in building and learning that provides study skills, time and money management training, etc.	• Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects*
Candidates have poor orientation to skilled trades requirements and lack of basic trades skills	Aboriginal colleges that include orientation to employment and people in trades courses	• Nishnawbe-Aski Nation*
	Orientation courses in secondary school as mandatory subjects	• Saskatchewan's Making a Connection with the Workplace*
Candidates do not know if they have the aptitudes and basic skills needed for apprenticeship (pre-admission testing is culturally biased)	Standardized tests for candidate selection	• Mi'kmaq Community Aboriginal Carpenter Training Program*
	Employer testing of candidates in work-like settings instead of using standardized tests	• Nishnawbe-Aski Nation*

Step 4 — Locate employer and apply for apprenticeship

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Labour market demand is weak; few apprenticeable positions are possible	Agreements (such as RBAs) between Aboriginal groups and governments integrated with economic development and other education and training plans	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board of BC*
	Skill needs forecast by determining equipment requirements at time of proposal submission for projects	• PCL Construction*
	Private-industry proposals for work in Aboriginal areas done in partnership with Aboriginal communities to integrate projects with other community enterprises and build new enterprises; approval of projects on reserves, including requirement to hire local apprentices	• PCL Construction* • Yukon Government Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects*
	Increase in number of apprenticeship positions by providing wage subsidies to employers	• Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects*
Number of apprenticeship positions varies over time making completion risky	Apprentices hired by Band or other project authority who administers apprenticeship agreement as the employer and finds contract positions for apprentices	• Nishnawbe-Aski Nation* • Saskatchewan's Making a Connection with the Workplace* • Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin AMB*
	Community partnerships to provide minimum threshold for number of apprentice positions over time	• Kitigan Zi'bi, Maniwaki, Quebec
Aboriginal people find it difficult to approach employers to find apprenticeable positions	Liaison officer to connect provincial apprenticeship branch with Aboriginal community organizations	• Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin AMB* • NAAdMAAdWiiuk, Algoma AMB

Step 5 — Get accepted into apprenticeship

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Not enough journeypersons available to do project work, and they will work for apprentice wages; non-apprentice help who work for less are available; employers do not all agree that journeypersons needed to do all work in north	Approval of construction and other community-based projects, or granting license to develop to private employer contingent on hiring specific number of apprentices	• Yukon Government Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects* • PCL Construction*
Employer is unable to commit to retaining apprentice for duration of apprenticeship; may not want to hire apprentices as staff, only as subcontractors	Apprentices hired by Band or other project authority (e.g., Northern Apprenticeship Committee in Sask.) who administer apprentices so they accumulate needed hours in different jobs in north and south	• Nishnawbe-Aski Nation* • Saskatchewan's Making a Connection with the Workplace* • Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute* • Mi'kmaq Community Aboriginal Carpenter Training Program*
Some Aboriginal people fear signing apprenticeship contract due to misunderstanding of terms of indenture	Aboriginal liaison officers and support staff as part of apprenticeship projects to promote better understanding of apprenticeship contracts	• Fort Erie Native Friendship Centres • Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute* • Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin AMB*
Not enough journeypersons available especially in northern communities to provide available positions for apprentices	Adjusting ratio of journeypersons to apprentices, allowing journeypersons to take on more apprentices	• Eel River Crossing Apprenticeship Project*
	Supplement local community journeypersons with those from outside until number of journeypersons reaches needed level	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute*
	Sufficient funds in agreements with Aboriginal groups to support work of apprentices outside communities for periods of time	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board of BC*

Step 6 — Fulfill all training requirements

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Taking technical training outside of community (e.g., at a college in south) is a problem, especially for women	Technical training on reserve or in community: • establish training institute in or near the community • accredit community-based group to deliver training • communities pool resources to provide all training near them	• Pictou Landing First Nations Women's Carpenter Program* • Nishnawbe-Aski Nation* • Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects* • Yukon Government Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects* • Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute*
Cost of training individuals is higher in north than in south	Spare capacity at employer work site used to set up technical training; journeypersons from work site provide technical training as well as on-the-job training	• Alberta Pacific Site Delivery of Millwright Trades Training*
Some types of work required as part of apprenticeship curriculum are lacking	Replacement of components of curriculum with more relevant ones (e.g., remove some industrial and commercial and add environmental and residential	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute*
Apprenticeship system is culturally insensitive; some employers and unions are insensitive to Aboriginal values and ways of life	Curriculum and materials structured by Aboriginal people around the way they learn; training delivered in communities so apprentice can continue with daily activities and traditional ways of life	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute*
Employers find on-the-job training hours required for apprentices to be excessive	Adjustment of hours required for certain trades once it is ensured apprentices still meet full requirements for job performance as journeypersons	• Eel River Crossing Apprenticeship Project*
	Apprentice takes apprentice positions in nearby communities as communities plan together and pool resources	• Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute*

Step 7 — Pass certification examination

Challenges	Challenge resolution approaches	Case studies/examples
Examinations are culturally biased	Substitution of employer/project administered performance examinations or other alternative forms of trade competency assessment for the standard written ones	
	Tutoring of Aboriginal candidates to prepare them for written examinations in their trades	• Blood Indian First Nation Construction Ironworkers*

Note: AMB = Area Management Board

4 ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING BARRIERS: THE CASE STUDIES

In Chapter 1, we outlined some common "challenges" to participation and completion of apprenticeship training and, in the last chapter, we reviewed some of the challenges encountered by Aboriginal people in apprenticeship training. In both instances, we referred to current or past approaches to overcoming these challenges. In this chapter, we will provide more details about those examples.

The case studies included here are not the result of a single research effort. We did not use a statistically valid sampling design to call for examples nor to screen responses for inclusion in this report. Indeed, the issue here is not one of statistical representation. We are not suggesting that each example can be applied to all Aboriginal people, or even to a specific Aboriginal community. They are not all even "best case scenarios." In the next chapter, we will draw some conclusions about what works and what does not work (and why) in terms of Aboriginal peoples' participation in and completion of apprenticeship training; those conclusions are based on the case studies cited here.

Over 240 organizations were asked to provide information on Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship training and on approaches used to improve peoples' chances of success. Appendix 1 contains a list of the organizations that contributed in some way to this report by responding to that call for information. Some gave us specific examples used in this chapter. To allow for some consistency in responses, organizations were asked to provide examples of programs, projects, initiatives, etc., using a template. Additional examples were obtained by reviewing the literature on apprenticeship training and Aboriginal people, and by searching for information on the Internet (see References).

Case Studies from the Private (For-profit) Sector

PCL Construction Company

Incorporated in 1906, PCL has worked with First Nations clients throughout North America during the past century. In 1994, PCL approved a business plan for the First Nation and Native American Business Development Initiative. This initiative integrates construction projects involving First Nations and Native Americans with efforts to enhance community capacity in human resources, health care, natural resources, services, government priorities and other business development priorities. It is based on the fact that construction work among First Nations and Native Americans is a growing sector.

The goal is to create community self-sufficiency through training, employment, economic and business development. PCL is well able to orchestrate this kind of integrated approach to construction project planning and execution because it is in the business of construction management and general contracting services. The initiative is focused on gaining the active involvement of the First Nations or Native American nonprofit and self-governing organizations in the preparation of bids, project development and execution. The emphasis is as much on building community self-sufficiency as on the construction itself. Because many of the people needed to work on these projects are in the apprenticeable trades, each project has the potential to identify barriers to the recruitment and employment of apprentices and journeypersons and to find ways to overcome these barriers.

Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac)

Located in northern Alberta, Al-Pac is a world leader in the forest products sector. It operates in a nontraditional environment and is constantly seeking better ways to recruit and train its 400 employees. Because of the growing need for millwrights in the province, Al-Pac decided to find ways of streamlining apprenticeship training for people in this trade and to make the trade more attractive to Aboriginal people. The result is an initiative called the Alberta Pacific Site Delivery of Millwright Trades Training.

With the agreement of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and the Alberta Apprenticeship Board, the company will start offering both the technical training and on-the-job training at its sites, which have spare capacity to accommodate the training. And they are located much closer to the communities where existing and potential Aboriginal apprentices live. By providing the 6 weeks to 2 months of required technical training each year at its own sites, the company hopes to reduce the time apprentices are away from the work site. It will also reduce training costs by eliminating most of travel expenses. Potential apprentices, who might be reluctant to train in Edmonton, will likely take the training when the technical portion is provided close to home. The program is fully funded by Al-Pac.

Case Studies from Government

Yukon Government Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects

Old Crow Apprenticeship Program

This initiative is a cooperative effort between Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Yukon College and Yukon Advanced Education. The goal is to promote the carpentry trade and apprenticeship in a remote northern Yukon community. It responds to the need for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to have its own qualified tradespeople do the construction work on a new school rather than relying on contractors from outside.

Because the education level of potential participants in the community was often not adequate for them to succeed in carpentry apprenticeship training, a pre-trades qualifier program was introduced. A Yukon College instructor delivered a 6-week course in the community. Graduates from the course were eligible to attend Level 1 technical training in carpentry a few months later. This training was also held in the community, helping participants overcome the known barrier of having to travel outside the community. The students wrote the Level 1 carpentry exam and were credited time toward their apprenticeship. The Vuntut Gwitchin then indentured the students, providing them with employment. When construction on the new school began, the contractor had to agree to hire first-year apprentices from the program.

Yukon Government Apprenticeship Program

This initiative is an effort to promote trades and apprenticeship in all communities of the Yukon, giving priority to local hiring and First Nation involvement. On-the-job training is provided in the communities for unemployed registered apprentices or those who have just finished a pre-employment program in an apprenticeable trade. It has been in existence for about 15 years, and more than 60 apprentices have completed their apprenticeships through it.

Heavy Equipment Operator Training

This project is a cooperative endeavour of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Yukon College, and Yukon Advanced Education to provide the technical and on-the-job training needed for people to qualify for work in this trade on major construction projects. Yukon College provided a 4-week training course to orient students to the operation of heavy equipment and safety. The course was given in their community. For the construction work that followed, the general contractor winning the tender had to agree to hire the course graduates and provide a supervisor to train them on the job. At the moment, the trade of heavy equipment operator is not an apprenticeable trade in the Yukon.

Northwest Territories Apprenticeship Projects

Apprenticeship Training Assistance Program
This program aims to increase participation, particularly of Aboriginal people, in apprenticeship. It is a salary subsidy program in which the apprentice, the territorial government and the employer agree to an apprenticeship contract with a portion of the wages of the apprentice paid by the program. All of the funding comes from the territorial government. The number of Aboriginal apprentices has now increased to 56% of all apprenticeships.

Community Accreditation for Apprenticeship Training
Available training resources within a community are accredited for the delivery of apprenticeship and pre-employment courses. For many communities, the resources used are a collection of small professional shops, the local housing authority, territorial government shops and private contractors. The NWT Apprenticeship Branch inspects the sites and accredits them. This program has primarily been used for carpentry training.

Housing Maintainer Trade Designation
This innovative designation encompasses the trades of carpenter, plumber, electrician, painter and oil burner mechanic and helps to fulfill the need for skilled workers in residential maintenance.

Northern Student Services Officer
This position was created to assist apprentices and other NWT students attending colleges in Edmonton and area. They help students with such things as housing, financial arrangements and meeting with other northerners. The officer works on campus.

Case Studies from Aboriginal Employment and Training Management Boards

Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin Area Management Board (AMB)

In 1994, the Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin AMB introduced an apprenticeship revitalization program. The goal was to raise awareness in Aboriginal men and women of the skills they could acquire through apprenticeship training. It also aimed to help clients already registered in apprenticeship to complete their training and obtain certification. A key element of the program's success was connecting the Aboriginal communities with the Apprenticeship Branch through the assignment of a program liaison officer.

The program also included the creation and distribution of brochures (translated into Oji-Cree, Cree and Ojibway), the delivery of group presentations, individual counselling, placements of clients in apprenticeable positions, pre-apprenticeship training and assistance to apprentices in completing their program through to the certification exams. During the

first year, the AMB only assisted the First Nation communities. In the second year, services were expanded to all Aboriginal people in the AMB's area. The program was jointly sponsored by the AMB, Pathways to Success (Federal Government Aboriginal initiative) and Jobs Ontario. The program was terminated when the Ontario government withdrew funding support.

The program's results were commendable. Over 1000 people were contacted about apprenticeship opportunities during the two years of its operation. Funding from various projects/programs offered through Pathways to Success and Jobs Ontario were used to help people into apprenticeships, by supporting them in either upgrading and pre-apprenticeship training (104) or completing the program to certification (27). The greatest obstacles to success were an overworked liaison officer because the service area was too large; funds not assured for pre-apprenticeship training; termination of programs with established connections (Jobs Ontario); and the limited economic base in many communities to host apprenticeships, i.e., no employers with work in trades.

Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) Regional Bilateral Agreement (RBA) Study of Licensed Workers in Northern Communities

The NAN-RBA studied the training and employment of licensed workers in five northern communities (Big Trout Lake, Fort Hope, Moose Factory, Sandy Lake and Webequie). Four skill development process models were observed to be in use for the training and employment of licensed workers, depending on the nature of the trade. But all four models contained the same key elements for success:

- trainees are carefully selected and fully informed of what to expect;
- all trainees take an orientation/academic upgrading course before entering the skill development program (this course provides required mathematics, science and orientation to the specific trade);
- as much training and job experience as possible are gained in the home community (northern projects requiring journeypersons have a training clause in the contract);
- when trained in southern cities, trainees are paid expenses for periodic travel home;
- adequate subsidized living costs are provided to trainees and their dependents;
- supportive counselling is provided to all trainees in southern centres;
- a central agency was established to administer funding and deliver the program.

The study also concluded that communities would be more successful in having people enter apprenticeship and reach journeyperson status if their elementary and secondary school curriculums included technical mathematics, English, science as well as industrial arts (practical carpentry, electrical, wood working, motor mechanics, food handling and personal service). School guidance programs must also include much more about the world of work.

The study recommended establishing the ***James Bay Area Model for Training***, which moves away from the concept of having a minimum of 12 to 15 people in the same discipline before providing training. It focuses on the provision of a wider range of training for relatively small numbers of trainees in each category. A James Bay Education Centre (JBEC) would be set up to train people in a centre close to their communities. All trainees would take "Orientation to Employment" and "People in Trades" courses at JBEC before going into specific training in a trade. The JBEC would also offer both on-campus and off-campus training in a variety of skills. On returning to their communities, the trainees would do the on-the-job training arranged by the college, HRDC and others. The band chief would provide practical training in skills instructed at JBEC.

Aboriginal Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board of British Columbia

This initiative provides a partnership model for the development and delivery of apprenticeship training to Aboriginal people. Because of the ongoing skills needs among many nations in British Columbia, an Aboriginal Joint Apprenticeship Steering Committee was set up. The steering committee consists of representatives from industry, the Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission of British Columbia and the Aboriginal Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board. At the outset, the project was driven by the Shuswap Nation with funding from the Ministry of Labour, Apprenticeship Initiatives. Now the initiative is largely financially self-sufficient due to the continuing demand for journeypersons on reserve projects.

Case Studies from Aboriginal Band or Community Initiatives

Mi'kmaq Community: Pictou Landing First Nations Women's Carpenter Program

The Pictou Landing First Nations Women and the Mi'kmaq Band Council introduced a pilot project to increase the number of Mi'kmaq women in apprenticeship. A 5-year construction project at the Pictou Landing Reserve provides the employment base for the initiative. The Pictou Landing First Nations Women, the Band Council and the Nova Scotia Provincial Apprenticeship Branch have agreed to register five women from the reserve as carpenter apprentices. They will be employed on a

reserve construction project. Apprentice wages are paid as a normal project cost, while the additional costs for technical training and other client supports for the five apprentices are being paid by the Band Council.

One key to the success of the initiative is expected to be good client selection. Consequently, career assessments that include prior learning assessment are being used to select candidates. Because candidate numeracy and literacy levels are expected to be low, academic upgrading is included in the training plan. All technical training will also be provided on the reserve because attendance off reserve would pose a serious obstacle to participation in the program. Classroom instruction will be in the Mi'kmaq language.

Mi'kmaq Community: Aboriginal Carpenter Training Program

Although major residential construction work was underway on the Mi'kmaq reserve, the community had few journeyperson carpenters. A number had experience in the trade but lacked journeyperson certification. The aim of the training program was to bring five community members up to journeyperson status through work on the reserve's residential construction project. The program was developed by the Band Council with assistance from HRDC, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Branch and the Pathways Secretariat. Funding for the technical training and additional candidate support was provided by HRDC and Pathways, while apprentice wages were paid out of the normal construction budget.

Candidate selection was considered to be very important to the success of the initiative. A team of four (representatives of the Band Council, Apprenticeship Branch and Pathways and the band development officer) screened the candidates. The selection team had information on candidate aptitudes from tests (Differential Aptitude Test). As a result, the training of the five apprentice carpenters was tailored to their specific needs and included "apprentice carpenter upgrading" with mathematics, reading and writing components. Initially, the five were trained and supervised by a non-Aboriginal journeyperson. However, early on these duties were taken over by an Aboriginal carpenter newly certified through the program.

Eel River Crossing Band: Eel River Crossing Apprenticeship Project

A housing construction project on the Eel River Crossing Reserve began with too few qualified carpenters in the community to do the work. The Band Council and the Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Branch (AOCB) decided to enrol 12 young apprentices under the supervision of journeypersons. However, there were not enough journeypersons on the reserve to meet the standard one-to-one ratio. And all the candidates did not have the usual educational prerequisites. The AOCB and its Campbellton office worked with the band to find trainers for the apprentices. The AOCB also adjusted the standard journeyperson-to-apprentice ratios to accommodate the situation on the reserve. The usual educational prerequisites were not rigidly adhered to. As a result, 12 apprentices were registered and all obtained their journeyperson certification.

Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.: Metis Management Centre Fast Tracking Existing Applicants

Although this project is not an apprenticeship model, it has several elements that may be useful in the development of new approaches to overcoming the barriers to apprenticeship. Its objective is to place 125 Aboriginal social assistance or Employment Insurance clients into the industrial manufacturing sector. The project has four major components:

- attracting applicants into the manufacturing sector by using a computer program (Plato Learning System) that assists the employment counsellor in recognizing the skills needed for training and employment in the sector;
- assessing prior learning using a portfolio approach that enables the employment counsellor to fast track the client into the more advanced levels of training or work placements;
- training in computer skills in the manufacturing industry;
- providing language instruction and cross cultural understanding in cooperation with the employers.

Case Studies from Partnership Organizations

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Institute Inc. (AATI)

The AATI was set up in 1992 with participants representing 97 communities. More than 47,844 people fall within the area served by AATI, and clients are First Nations, Metis and non-status Aboriginal people. It began with pilot projects in Norway House First Nation and Sandy Bay First Nation. Additional projects were later undertaken in Lake St Martin, Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, Berens River First Nation, Little Saskatchewan First Nation, Lake Manitoba, Bird Tail Sioux, St Theresa Point, God's River, Pukatawagan and Long Plains. AATI's objective is to develop a base of skilled tradespeople in Manitoba's Aboriginal and northern communities. All training has been developed through the extensive participation of Aboriginal organizations, organized labour, Manitoba Education and Training Apprenticeship Branch and the federal government.

AATI's training strategy encompasses Aboriginal values, community-based control, training relevant to community needs, accredited path to full journeyperson status and development and delivery by and through Aboriginal organizations. The training is scheduled by communities to meet their needs and ensure that all trainees receive the required number of hours of on-the-job training. The success of the AATI training model is a result of the pooling of community resources, cooperative funding and the development of a training infrastructure at the community level.

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training: Making a Connection with the Workplace

Representatives of the apprenticeship system, school divisions in northern Saskatchewan, First Nations and Metis associations, postsecondary agencies and northern industry and employers identified a need to develop an education and training strategy that is community-based, enhances the school-to-work transition and is focused on trades and technology occupations that are expanding in the north. Pilot projects were set up in five communities to respond to this need: La Ronge, Pinehouse, Beauval, Cumberland House and Stanley Mission.

The projects primarily involve the active collaboration of two groups: the Northern Apprenticeship Committee (NAC) and Trades and Technology Partnership Committee. The NAC is a community-based partnership that seeks to improve northerners access to skills training and stable employment. It serves as a recruiting and coordinating agency for northern tradespeople and provides support to industry. The NAC can indenture apprentices directly, which allows it to hold the apprenticeship contract of individuals. It facilitates their progress toward completion of apprenticeship training.

The Trades and Technology Partnership Committee has representation from school divisions, First Nations, the apprenticeship system, northern industry and postsecondary agencies. Its aim is to expand the trades and technology portions of the high school curriculum and to expand the work experience options open to students.

Together, the two committees are working to overcome several barriers to work experience and work placements in northern communities. These include the limited number of work opportunities in the north; the few construction projects in many communities; emphasis on local hiring that reduces the opportunities for school student work placements; lack of apprenticeship culture and poor employer knowledge of apprenticeship; and little coordination in work placements. To overcome these barriers, the committees hired two workplace coordinators to:

- revise the Exploring Trades and Technology curricula;
- develop a database and inventory of employers/industry and other stakeholder groups;
- identify a limited number of supervised work experience sites for pilot communities and develop partnership agreements;
- prepare a selection process for placing high school students in specific work sites;

- assess indentured apprentices in the communities for work placements;
- develop career paths for each indentured apprentice;
- coordinate apprentices with the work sites;
- develop processes for prior learning assessment.

Blood Indian First Nation Construction Ironworkers

Almost half of the construction ironworkers in Alberta are Aboriginal people, but few of them have ever registered as apprentices and obtained journeyperson certification. Without this status they cannot move up to supervisory positions, which limits their incomes.

Alberta law allows ironworkers with at least 6500 hours on the job to write the certification examinations. Most of the Aboriginal ironworkers have solid trade knowledge and skills, but little experience in writing examinations. With the help of a Canadian Executive Services Organization volunteer, a half dozen men living on the Standoff reserve prepared for the examination. As a result, one passed the examination, and the others did well enough to be encouraged to try again. A second recently succeeded in obtaining certification.

The First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec

This regional commission has been dedicating its energy and resources to the successful implementation of its Regional Bilateral Agreement among the member communities of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL). The regional commission, composed of 24 Local First Nation Commissions (LFNC), is the organization established by the AFNQL to administer its labour market agreement with the federal government.

Since the autumn of 1997, the regional commission has been developing its policy on employment equity through a pilot project with Air Canada. This initiative has focused on the development of the terms and conditions required for any one of the 92 employment equity employers (federally-regulated) operating in Quebec to form a management relationship with the regional commission.

Federal equity employers who want access to the First Nation labour market in pursuit of their equity objectives must establish a formal relationship with the 24 LFNCs. Within its employment equity policy framework, the regional commission proposes to focus on apprenticeship as one of the priority topics of discussion with the employers. The objective for the regional commission is to promote apprenticeship as the training option of choice. The motive driving this approach is to improve Aboriginal peoples' access to training in apprenticeable trades where the employers have identified significant demand.

The John Kim Bell National Aboriginal Achievement Awards and Career Fairs

Many people have recognized the value of scholarships and awards in the promotion of excellence in a given field. Several years ago, John Kim Bell established the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. When this program first started, there was much discussion around the promotion of the recipients as solid role models, especially for youth. One idea that was quickly endorsed was for the recipients to make presentations on their experiences — to tell their stories. This was done the day after the awards in a forum that youth in the area were invited to attend. (The venue changes each year, with east and west alternating.) The richness of these gatherings was enhanced by organizing a career fair around the presentations, at which other workers were invited to give seminars or workshops on their career paths.

The success of these fairs led John Kim Bell to give them a life of their own. His strategy is to conduct two fairs each year at times that make most sense for the locale in which they are held. In 1998, fairs were held in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. This approach is not difficult to copy as long as the appropriate resources can be found. We can expect to see other communities or groups adopt this approach. The organizers of the National Aboriginal Career Symposium, held every two years in Ottawa, have received numerous requests for information and ideas groups might employ to conduct fairs of their own.

Sable Offshore Energy Initiative (SOEI)

The SOEI is multidimensional. The five owners, which include Mobil, Imperial and Shell, will be extracting natural gas and its by-products from three oil rigs located 200 km off the coast of Nova Scotia. They also own two onshore processing facilities. The project should be supplying natural gas and by-products for the next 20 years.

With the SOEI in the backyard of the Mi'kmaq First Nation, the owners recognized the importance of promoting Aboriginal business development and employment in the project. Aboriginal inclusion became a part of every facet of project development. To date, over 30 Aboriginal people have been employed in the project itself. Many are in apprenticeable trades, such as welding and pipefitting. Others are general labourers. Some Aboriginal people work on the offshore rigs.

The owners established a policy requiring subcontractors to demonstrate how they would include Aboriginal people in their work. An Aboriginal business alliance was formed and has helped SOEI identify contracting opportunities with Aboriginal businesses. It has also heightened the awareness of non-Aboriginal businesses about the potential of employing Aboriginal people. Over 60 Aboriginal businesses have provided contracted services directly or indirectly related to the SOEI.

SOEI is committed to the training of First Nations peoples. In one case, SOEI had a vessel company agree to train an Aboriginal person as a deck hand. After just three weeks of on-the-job training, that person was offered a job with a major offshore rigging company. SOEI intends to continue its efforts to see increased numbers of Aboriginal people trained and employed in its operations and by other businesses in the surrounding communities.

5 OUR FINDINGS: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOES NOT WORK

The purpose of this chapter is to extract — from the vast quantities of information and the many ideas presented earlier — approaches to overcoming barriers that work. In undertaking this study, we asked a large number of people and organizations about their experiences with apprenticeship. Many described projects and initiatives aimed at increasing Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship. We received lists of barriers or obstacles to apprenticeship entry, and we also received detailed descriptions of projects or approaches that help overcome some of the barriers. Very few people told us about projects or initiatives that did not work well, although some did mention problems that might have led to failure if they had not been addressed and resolved in the project at some point.

But we can also learn a lot from history. Many programs have tried to improve the economic and employment situation of Aboriginal people. Most have come from the "centre" — for example, the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS). This was an approach that was flexible, but still tried to find solutions that could be applied to all Aboriginal people in every location — a one size fits all approach. CAEDS also failed to realize its full potential because the three federal departments involved did not work together at the community level. On the other hand, a program called Pathways to Success, signalled a new way of approaching seemingly intractable problems in employment development. It worked by putting the authority for employment training and the resources to support it in the hands of Aboriginal institutions. It focused on activities at the regional and community levels.

Our summary, therefore, is based both on information from historical efforts to address employment and training problems, including participation in apprenticeship, and the new information provided by the many contributors named in Appendix 1.

What Does Not Work

1. Centralized decision-making about program design, priorities and delivery mechanisms

- Neither Ottawa nor provincial/territorial capitals are in a good position to decide what kinds of programs or initiatives will increase Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship.

- Government departments/agencies (e.g., HRDC or provincial/territorial apprenticeship branches) cannot understand or properly deal with the various needs and perspectives of different Aboriginal communities.

- Decision-making from the centre does not work even when the central body has significant Aboriginal input, as occurred under the Pathways to Success approach.

2. A "one size fits all" approach to program design or delivery

- Recognition of qualifications earned in a trade and the ability to practise the trade outside a single community requires standards. But allowing only one means of achieving the standard shuts people out.

- Not all aspects of existing apprenticeable trades are needed or can be practised in every community. Requiring apprentices in all communities to qualify in all aspects has limited participation in some trades.

- A lack of flexibility in applying regulations around technical training class sizes, the ratio of apprentices to journeypersons and apprenticeship registration procedures has reduced the success of apprenticeship training initiatives.

3. Developing projects or initiatives that are focused only on the supply of skilled tradespeople rather than on the demand for people in skilled trades

- Aboriginal apprenticeship liaison officers have not been very successful in increasing participation in apprenticeship when they focused only on promoting apprenticeship among clients (potential new apprentices) — selling the concept to employers is equally important.

- Initiatives not rooted in an overall economic development approach have had limited success.

4. Designing and implementing projects without the participation of all key players

- Projects that are not community-focused have not succeeded. At the same time, those that lacked participation by employer representatives, unions, colleges or other technical/trades trainers, apprenticeship branch, all Aboriginal groups and in particular Aboriginal women were less than successful.

5. Implementing programs without also providing counselling and other supports

- Supports should include such services as child care and payment of travel expenses.

6. Allowing only one means of assessing apprentice competency

- The standard for assessing competency is currently a written trade examination; however, other methods can and should be found for assessing competency of Aboriginal apprentices.

7. Developing and implementing a program in the absence of complete information on the economic development and employment situation in a community or region

- Some training projects failed because the initiators did not begin the process with a clear identification of the current and potential skill needs (e.g., by not identifying the skills needed to operate and maintain new equipment to be used in the overall project).

- Sometimes it is difficult to know when a large apprenticeship project has succeeded in improving participation because so little information on Aboriginal people in apprenticeship is collected by any level of government or by Aboriginal groups themselves.

What Works in the Planning and Funding of Apprenticeship Training

1. Integrating decision-making regarding the planning, funding and delivery of apprenticeship training for Aboriginal people at the community level with the planning, design and implementation of broader economic development programs and projects

   - Government funding for Aboriginal apprenticeship projects has had its greatest impact on increasing participation when it is provided to regional groups (e.g., Aboriginal human resources development agreement groups, formerly called RBAs). Many communities lack the critical mass to provide apprenticeships over the time required for completion of all the on-the-job training.

   - Incentives for business start-up and expansion are most often available from regional and municipal governments/organizations (e.g., business development branch of a regional municipality). Yet employment development programs are usually run by federal or provincial/territorial government departments. Businesses in the manufacturing and service sectors can effectively use business development and employment programs to increase Aboriginal apprenticeship training when the programs are coordinated at the regional/municipal level (e.g., by a regional business development organization working in partnership with an RBA).

   - The number and variety of apprenticeships for Aboriginal people can be increased by including formal apprenticeship agreements in business development and training agreements reached with industry sectors covered by the *Federal Employment Equity Act* (e.g., trucking companies and aerospace industries).

   - Expansion of apprenticeship programs can be initiated by including a requirement in land-claim agreements signed with Aboriginal organizations to fund an increased number of apprenticeship positions.

2. Designing, developing and delivering apprenticeship projects through partnerships

   - These include partnerships of the provincial/territorial ministries of education, training and labour, provincial/territorial apprenticeship branches, a regional Aboriginal group (e.g., RBA), a community group or groups (e.g., Pictou Landing First Nations Women), a training provider (e.g., a community college), industry and labour organizations.

3. Identifying skill needs at the time of project planning and proposal development and identifying how those needs can be met through apprenticeship

   - Skill needs are best identified at the time projects (for example, major construction projects on a reserve) are proposed and equipment requirements become known. The execution of projects can be planned to include a maximum use of apprentices rather than labourers. The costs of planning and managing work to develop the regional or local Aboriginal labour force broadly through apprenticeships has to be built into the project costs.

   - The approval of major projects can be contingent on the hiring of local apprentices. Including a local hiring and apprenticeship clause in project approvals has to be carefully examined in light of the mobility of labour provisions found in Chapter 7 of The Agreement for Internal Trade.

What Works in Creating an Awareness of Employment in the Trades and of Apprenticeship

4. Producing and distributing across Canada, videos, brochures, posters and photos featuring Aboriginal people and showing employment opportunities in the trades

   - High-quality promotional materials can be used by Aboriginal liaison officers working in an Aboriginal employment and training organization, Native services officers in colleges and private trade schools, by career counsellors in secondary and postsecondary schools and by staff in non-Aboriginal employment centres (e.g., federal/provincial resource centres) and Aboriginal employment centres (e.g., Native Friendship Centres).

   - Canada-wide materials must be supplemented by regional Aboriginal groups. The regional materials highlight specific projects where apprentices and journeypersons train and work. They focus on Aboriginal success stories.

   - The best promotional materials are those developed by or in cooperation with Aboriginal people.

5. Funding Aboriginal liaison officer or Native services positions in Aboriginal communities, in colleges that provide technical training to Aboriginal people and in provincial/territorial apprenticeship branches

   - A key role of Aboriginal liaison officers or Native services coordinators is to identify Aboriginal role models, mentors and trainers among Aboriginal employers and journeypersons. The role models, mentors and trainers are invited to participate in apprenticeship information sessions in Aboriginal communities. The target audience of the information sessions is usually Aboriginal secondary school students but could include elementary school students.

   - Aboriginal liaison officers or Native service coordinators also serve as the link between Aboriginal people and industry sector organizations as well as employers. They have been able to bring information to industry on Aboriginal culture and the value of apprenticeship in the training and employment of Aboriginal people.

6. Developing career/employment counsellor training materials focused on the trades and apprenticeships, in general, and on Aboriginal challenges and opportunities, in particular

   - The training materials can be used in the training of career counsellors at universities in Canada and in the training provided through workshops and seminars such as the University of Ottawa Summer Institute for Career Development Practitioners.

   - Special workshops and seminars can be set up for Aboriginal employment staff where the training materials can be used.

7. Including awards that recognize outstanding achievements of apprentices and partnerships that have expanded Aboriginal participation in apprenticeships in the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards program of John Kim Bell

What Works in Addressing Educational and Learning Disadvantages

8. Ensuring Aboriginal people take the core courses in secondary school needed for entry to the trades (e.g., mathematics, sciences, language, industrial arts)

   - Aboriginal apprenticeship partners include provincial/territorial ministries of education, training and labour. As part of a comprehensive apprenticeship improvement plan, secondary schools (non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal) should provide more basic trades courses.

9. Offering Aboriginal secondary students supervised work experiences in their own communities

   - Basic trades skills can be learned, and the work experiences can count as credits toward apprenticeship within the apprentice's own community.

   - Supervised work experience programs work best when the schools hire Aboriginal workplace coordinators.

10. Providing pre-trades or pre-apprenticeship qualifier training programs that include basic learning skills, pre-apprenticeship familiarization and academic upgrading, particularly in the core skill areas for the trades

    - Training that is funded by Aboriginal coordinating groups such as that offered through the RBAs can include upgrading courses in mathematics, languages, sciences and industrial arts (e.g., practical carpentry, woodworking, motor mechanics), as well as courses in basic learning skills (e.g., study skills, time and money management).

    - Distance learning programs are offered by a number of colleges and private trade schools. These focus on the core areas of mathematics, sciences and language. The core courses are also supplemented by other pre-apprenticeship courses such as motor mechanics.

    - The greatest success has come from the provision of pre-trades or pre-apprenticeship training in Aboriginal communities by Aboriginal trainers and training organizations. When this training is taken outside of the community, it will only be successful or even possible if financial supports are provided (e.g., travel expenses).

11. Applying alternatives to the completion of the normal course prerequisites (e.g., high school mathematics) in the selection or acceptance into apprenticeships of Aboriginal people

    - In some cases, the normal course prerequisites can be waived if it is shown that many Aboriginal candidates can succeed in both the technical and on-the-job components without the formal course credits.

    - Prior learning assessment can be used to determine whether Aboriginal apprenticeship candidates possess the necessary skills, if they do not have the usually-recognized course credits.

What Works in Coordinating Apprenticeship, Technical and On-the-Job Training

12. Good coordination starts with a close working relationship between the RBA and provincial/territorial apprenticeship branch who together set up coordinating bodies in each region of the province/territory (e.g., regional commissions in Quebec)

13. Administering Aboriginal apprenticeships through an Aboriginal organization that serves as employer and coordinator

    - Apprentices can be indentured to a band or other Aboriginal project authority that pays the apprentice's wages, arranges for the technical training and places the apprentice at various work sites for the on-the-job component. The apprentice is contracted out by the band or project authority to one or more contracted employers.

    - The resources of several communities are pooled to provide for apprentices' wages and work opportunities.

14. Recruiting and hiring Aboriginal apprentices for both public- and private-sector employers by Aboriginal employment agencies (e.g., Native friendship centres)

    - These organizations can locate apprenticeship opportunities with employers, screen and select apprentices and provide ongoing employment counselling support.

What Works in Delivering Technical Training

15. Aboriginal training institutes or other Aboriginal training agents providing technical training to apprentices in a region

- An apprenticeship training institute can be established through a joint agreement of the Aboriginal communities (identified in a RBA) with the provincial/territorial apprenticeship branch, provincial/territorial ministry of education and perhaps a community college. The institute receives accreditation from the ministry of education to provide credit courses at the postsecondary level and academic upgrading for secondary school credits.
- The Aboriginal training institute uses Aboriginal trainers and journeypersons.
- The training institute is located in a community where access is easiest from the surrounding region.
- Spare training facilities available from employers in the region are used.
- The training institute provides pre-apprenticeship courses such as in learning skills and industrial arts.

16. Accrediting community groups to provide academic upgrading, pre-apprenticeship, and the technical training

- Community groups can economically provide training in a local area for small class sizes (e.g., for 12–15 people).
- Community group accredited delivery can include instruction in an Aboriginal language.

17. Tailoring the training content to the needs of the local communities in a region

- Components of the provincially/territorially prescribed content for a particular trade are not always applicable in a region. Agreements can be reached with the apprenticeship branch to remove those components and replace them with more relevant ones (e.g., remove some industrial and commercial skill requirements from electrical technician and replace them with environmental and residential skill requirements).
- The curriculum and materials can be structured by Aboriginal people around the way they work and learn in a particular region without watering down the content requirements.

What Works in Delivering the On-the-Job Training Component

18. Providing wage subsidies to employers to hire additional apprentices

19. Crediting the hours required for certain trades once it is ensured that apprentices still meet the full requirements for job performance as journeypersons

20. Pooling work experience opportunities across communities to provide all apprentices with sufficient on-the-job hours to complete their apprenticeships

21. Adjusting the standard journeyperson-to-apprentice ratio allowing journeypersons to take on more apprentices

    - This can work in cases where it is agreed by all parties to the apprenticeship agreements that the training can effectively be given under the lower ratios.

22. Informing Aboriginal people that they may "challenge" for journeyperson status by writing the trade certification examination(s) even if they have not been registered as an apprentice

    - Aboriginal people need only demonstrate that they have accumulated the work skills through relevant work experience that can be verified.

    - If candidates succeed on the written examination and can demonstrate that they have worked in the trade, they will have shown they meet the skill requirements for the trade. Aboriginal people often work in a trade for many years without going through the formal apprenticeship system.

    - To succeed on the written examination, candidates can be given tutoring to enable them to apply their skills and knowledge on a written examination.

6 OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

In the preceding chapter, we synthesized what works and what does not work from the considerable information provided to us by a variety of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. That chapter alone should help some groups establish approaches that will increase Aboriginal participation and success in apprenticeship training. But some of those ideas sparked discussion among us about important policy or program delivery issues and prompted us to consider ways of moving people quickly to action.

In this chapter we focus on recommendations. We are concerned that these not be viewed as an attempt to prescribe what should be done in all Aboriginal communities. We emphasize again that in our view a "one size fits all" approach will not work. Also, the majority of the suggestions we make relate to things that are *already done* — even if only in one or a few locations.

We do see a number of elements that are key to success, and these form the basis of the recommendations that follow. We present recommendations in four specific areas — roles and responsibilities, criteria for success in program/project delivery, alternative or additional approaches in apprenticeship delivery to meet aboriginal needs, and promoting apprenticeship — and hope they will prove to be a focus for discussion and action, particularly at the community level.

Roles and Responsibilities

We recommend an apprenticeship planning and funding approach for Aboriginal people that:

1. is integrated with the planning and funding of economic development, infrastructure development, employment development and training projects;

2. uses funding from a variety of sources including Indian and Northern Development (IAND) core funding; IAND social services funding for employable clients; provincial/territorial employment and training programs; individual companies for private-sector projects; HRDC funds provided through Aboriginal human resources development agreements;

3. where appropriate, involves a partnership arrangement among a regional Aboriginal organization; local community organizations; provincial/territorial apprenticeship branch; provincial/territorial ministries of education, training and labour; a training provider (e.g., community college); employers and their organizations; and labour unions;

4. pools the resources of a number of communities to support apprenticeships;

5. is managed and led by Aboriginal organizations constituted under Aboriginal human resources development agreements (formerly RBAs) and given authority by band chiefs, even though the terms of agreement may be different for the different organizations (if possible, these organizations should be constituted from existing Aboriginal groups);

6. involves firm multiyear funding commitments for apprenticeship training and its administration;

7. contains a clear commitment by senior employer and union officials (accompanied by an action plan) to increasing the number of Aboriginal people successfully completing apprenticeships.

Criteria for Success in Program or Project Delivery

We recommend the implementation of a program or project delivery approach where:

8. the development of apprenticeship training opportunities for Aboriginal people is focused on trades in demand in the community, including the Aboriginal community, and reflects the economic and business reality of the community;

9. mentors, coaches and trainers are identified at the outset of program delivery and, where possible, they are drawn from among Aboriginal employers and journeypersons;

10. funding is provided to permit the hiring of an Aboriginal liaison officer who serves as the bridge between the apprentice, community and the provincial and federal government departments, including the apprenticeship branches;

11. employment counselling programs are available to Aboriginal apprentices (these should be designed and delivered by Aboriginal people and should respect the way Aboriginal people seek and accept assistance with employment and other issues);

12. child care and transportation expenses are covered;

13. the formats for technical training and on-the-job training are structured by Aboriginal people around the way they work and learn in a particular region;

14. adequate and sufficient work is provided to ensure that apprentices can complete all of the technical and on-the-job training within the usual 3-5 year period;

15. the technical training is provided in or near an apprentice's home community by establishing aboriginal apprenticeship training institutes that serve a number of communities or by accrediting community groups to deliver the training;

16. apprentices can be indentured to an Aboriginal group (that serves as the employer), which in turn contracts the apprentice out to various public- or private-sector employers;

17. a process is put in place to follow-up on and evaluate the outcomes of various apprenticeship training initiatives (at a minimum, all Aboriginal organizations involved in apprenticeship should maintain baseline information, such as number registered in each trade, where and when technical training is taken, name(s) of employer, etc.);

18. decisions on program/project design and delivery are made at the community level through a partnership of the Aboriginal organizations in the community and region, employers, unions, government departments, education and training organizations;

19. incentives and/or awards are offered to employers, unions or community groups for increasing the number of Aboriginal people who successfully complete apprenticeships;

20. a system exists for identifying and sharing information on effective Aboriginal apprenticeship practices;

21. cultural sensitivity is shown in the apprentice selection process, particularly in the selection interview.

Alternative or Additional Approaches in Apprenticeship Delivery to Meet Aboriginal Needs

Finding alternative ways of doing things does not mean disregarding standards. It does mean that individual or community differences are taken into account in reaching the same end result in apprenticeship — journeyperson status for people who meet all of the necessary job performance requirements of their trade.

We recommend the implementation, where needed and appropriate, of at least the following alternative approaches that help Aboriginal people reach journeyperson status:

22. promoting the awareness that people who have worked for the required hours in a trade, but have not formally registered as apprentices, can take the certification examination and be given journeyperson status if successful on the examination (this alternative would be used if candidates can be tutored in applying their trade knowledge on an examination);

23. using prior learning assessment to determine whether candidates have specific learning experiences that are equivalent to the prescribed educational requirements for entry into a trade;

24. providing potential apprentices with access to pre-apprenticeship or pre-trades qualifier training that may include upgrading in core academic areas;

25. providing Aboriginal secondary school students with the option of undertaking work experiences that are credited toward apprenticeships and secondary school completion;

26. expanding distance learning programs aimed at upgrading Aboriginal people in mathematics, sciences and language;

27. adjusting the standard journeyperson-to-apprentice ratio used for the on-the-job training to allow employers to take on more apprentices, where the training can be effectively given under the higher ratios;

28. developing alternative methods for giving examinations that retain the same standards for technical competency as the existing written examinations (e.g., giving examinations orally rather than requiring written ones, when requested).

Promoting Apprenticeship

We recognize that careers in the trades are often undervalued. Many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike place a higher value on the professions. In addition, a large proportion of our youth, their parents, employers and even school counsellors do not know that entry and progression in some key trades is through apprenticeship. Information about apprenticeships and the trades has to be communicated. But attitudes also need to change.

We recommend a systematic and sustained approach to bridging this information gap that:

29. targets groups such as workers (particularly youth), families, school counsellors and teachers, employers, unions and Aboriginal organizations;

30. involves the development and provision across the country of high-quality career materials focused on apprenticeship for youth and their families (we mean materials such as videos, posters, games, pamphlets, TV specials, CD-ROM and various Internet products);

31. involves the preparation of career materials for use by school teachers, counsellors, Aboriginal workplace coordinators and Aboriginal mentors and coaches (these should attempt to overcome existing negative stereotypes and teach youth about the trades and apprenticeship, and what is needed to succeed in them);

32. contains materials designed by and specifically for Aboriginal people that can be used in local community information sessions, community newspapers and public information bulletins and job fairs to advertise apprenticeship opportunities;

33. supports the development of materials for Aboriginal elementary students such as group activities and games that explain the value of apprenticeship and the trades;

34. involves the preparation of apprenticeship "marketing materials" for use by Aboriginal employment counsellors or liaison officers with employers (for example, pamphlets showing the "return on investment" when an employer hires and trains apprentices);

35. directly involves national and provincial organizations whose mandate includes the preparation and distribution of career materials, organizations such as the Canada Career Consortium, the Canada Career Information Partnerships and the Canada Career Information Association;

36. includes the introduction of an Aboriginal scholarships and bursaries program aimed at assisting Aboriginal youth to pay for the apprenticeship technical training and to provide financial support for travel and child care.

7 NEXT STEPS

Our Perspective

Our *mission*, as members of the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects Steering Committee, is to increase Aboriginal participation in the apprenticeable trades and occupations. There are compelling reasons for achieving that mission as quickly as possible. We have referred to a "baby boom" among Aboriginal people. The future supply of labour in Canada will come from Aboriginal people and immigrants to the country. This is a great economic opportunity for Aboriginal people. But we also observed that without significant job growth for Aboriginal people, the high levels of unemployment and poverty that they now experience will remain unchanged. Employment in the apprenticeable trades and occupations could constitute up to 10% of all employment for Aboriginal people. It is an area of job growth that we can not overlook.

We fundamentally believe that:

- The challenge is one of connecting Aboriginal people with the jobs that exist now and in the future in the apprenticeable trades and occupations. Making that connection involves knowing about apprenticeship. It means valuing work in the trades and valuing apprenticeship training as the way to get there. It means giving Aboriginal apprentices the support they need throughout training to meet the many challenges they face to completion of the program — training and supervision that recognizes how they work and learn.

- Aboriginal students and workers should know more about the trades and apprenticeship training.

- Aboriginal organizations need to know more about apprenticeships. They must understand how to work with employers and unions in creating opportunities for Aboriginal people to enter apprenticeship training.

- Employers and unions have to be aware of the barriers or challenges that often prevent Aboriginal people from entering or completing apprenticeships.

This report contains many "what works" statements that suggest how individuals and groups can get to know more about apprenticeship training and how Aboriginal people can gain access to it.

We also believe that

- The apprenticeship program does *not* need revamping. New legislation or major regulatory changes offer little in terms of addressing the kinds of challenges to apprenticeship training entry and success faced by Aboriginal people, and others for that matter.

- Some good things are happening across the country and they are leading to increasing participation and success of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship training. The success stories and "best practices" should be shared among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. The steering committee believes that many Aboriginal apprenticeship successes and best practices have been captured in this report.

- New organizational structures are *not* required. The focal point for change and improvement must be at the community level. Aboriginal organizations formed, or being formed, to sign Aboriginal human resources development agreements (formerly called the RBAs) are best situated to implement the recommendations offered in this report.

Our Role

We are committed to seeing this report widely distributed and discussed within various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal constituencies. We are also committed to becoming "champions" and "spokespersons" for an increased focus on Aboriginal apprenticeship training.

We do not want this report to sit on a shelf. We intend to put some "feet" under our recommendations by taking action in the three areas described below.

Advocacy

We will become advocates for increasing the number of Aboriginal people in apprenticeships. We will seek out opportunities to address individuals and gatherings within their constituencies.

We will present the key findings of this report to the national Aboriginal organizations. We want their buy-in and support so that local bands can sponsor Aboriginal apprenticeship initiatives.

We will also identify additional "champions" for Aboriginal apprenticeship initiatives among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders. We will provide these champions with a presentation package of the report and we will ask the four sponsors of the steering committee (Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs, CLFDB's National Apprenticeship Committee and HRDC) to support the champions in their advocacy work.

We will make formal presentations to officials at HRDC, IAND and Industry Canada, as well as to ministers/staff in all provincial/territorial ministries responsible for training and labour market matters.

Increasing Awareness among Aboriginal People of Apprenticeship Training

We will provide advice to the National Apprenticeship Marketing Project being undertaken by the CLFDB's National Apprenticeship Committee, one of the four sponsors of this report.

We will make a formal request to the Canada Career Consortium to draft a two-year plan aimed at significantly increasing the amount of career material produced focusing on Aboriginal people in apprenticeships.

We will ask the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Sector Council to develop a plan for promoting Aboriginal apprenticeship training within the sector.

We will ask the CLFDB to include a member from the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Projects Steering Committee on its National Apprenticeship Committee.

Promoting Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiatives and Projects

We challenge Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups to undertake specific initiatives or projects aimed at increasing the number of new Aboriginal apprentices. When distributing the report, we will ask those organizations to indicate how they might respond. We expect that some responses might include:

- identification of trades or sectors where Aboriginal participation is low;
- identification of work opportunities;
- determination of specific ways to improve Aboriginal access to the work opportunities;
- targeting of the creation of Aboriginal apprenticeships in manufacturing as well as construction and service trades;

- development of strategies or approaches for increasing Aboriginal participation in urban as well as rural settings — on reserves as well as off;
- listing of the key players in the community needed for the setting up of apprenticeship initiatives;
- forging of partnerships of Aboriginal groups with employers and unions;
- setting of some Aboriginal apprenticeship training targets and procedures for determining success.

We will ask the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship and the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs to set up a working group that can follow-up on the call to establish Aboriginal apprenticeship initiatives and projects. The working group can:

- publicize the initiatives/projects, serving as a clearinghouse for best practices information;
- develop an incentive program that rewards the creation of new Aboriginal apprenticeships (e.g., by providing an incentive of $25,000 to an employer for each additional Aboriginal apprentice who achieves journeyperson status);
- coordinate and administer the pilot projects proposed below.

We will ask the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs and HRDC to support the following pilot projects (to be coordinated and administered by a working group):

1. Design and test a computerized system in at least one region (or a whole province/territory) for compiling and maintaining an inventory of uncertified Aboriginal workers in all of the apprenticeable trades applicable to that region/province/territory. The computerized inventory of workers would be used to compile individual worker profiles that will show workers the apprenticeship credits they may be granted and the technical and on-the-job training to be completed for certification.

2. Design and test a computerized system in at least one region for compiling and maintaining an inventory of Aboriginal journeypersons. The computerized inventory of journeypersons would be used to identify role models, mentors and potential trainers for community-based training delivery.

3. Design an Aboriginal apprenticeship scholarship and bursary program, establish base funding and promote the program in at least one province/territory.

4. Investigate, develop and test an alternative to the written examination for Aboriginal apprentices in one Red Seal trade and in one province/territory.

APPENDIX 1 ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE STUDY

Aboriginal Liaison Directorate, Hull, Quebec
Aboriginal Futures I, Saint John, New Brunswick
Alberta Pacific Forest Industries, Edmonton, Alberta
BC Industry, Training and Apprenticeship Commission, Aboriginal Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board *Best Practices Survey*
Blood Indian First Nation (as related by Canadian Executive Services Organization)
Cowessess First Nation (Postsecondary Program), Alberta
Eel River Crossing Apprenticeship Project, Eel River, New Brunswick
First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (Mario Dagenais)
Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, Fort Erie, Ontario
Kitigan Zi'bi, Maniwaki, Quebec (Gilbert Whiteduck)
Lower Nicola Indian Band, Merritt, British Columbia
Mamo-Wichi-Hetwin Area Management Board
Manitoba First Nations Regional Aboriginal Management Board Inc, Winnipeg, Thompson, The Pas, Manitoba — Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Initiative Inc.
Manitoba Metis Federation, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Mi'Kmaq Community, Nova Scotia — Carpenter Training Program
Mi'Kmaq Community, Nova Scotia, Pictou Landing First Nation's Women's Carpenter Program
Miskokomom, Joseph, Ontario
NAAdMAAdWiiuk, Algoma Area Management Board, Ontario
Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, Big Trout Lake, Fort Hope, Moose Factory, Sandy Lake, Webequie, Ontario
NWT Education, Culture and Employment (Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project)

PCL Construction
Refocusing Apprenticeship, Halifax, Nova Scotia (not Aboriginal-specific)
Sable Offshore Energy Project, Nova Scotia
Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training — Northern Apprenticeship Committee and Trades and Technology Partnership Committee
White Sands First Nations, Thunder Bay, Ontario
Woods, Peter, Nova Scotia
Yukon Education, Whitehorse, Yukon — three Aboriginal apprenticeship projects (Old Crow, Yukon Government, Heavy Equipment Operator)

The above organizations and individuals provided responses through one of the following means:

- a case study template;
- statistical data in table format;
- listing of barriers by e-mail, fax or mail;
- individual interviews with the Discussion Paper Research Team;
- feedback on draft versions of the discussion paper.

APPENDIX 2
TRADES INCLUDED IN THE INTERPROVINCIAL STANDARDS (RED SEAL) PROGRAM*

Appliance service technician
Automotive painter
Automotive service technician
Baker
Boilermaker
Bricklayer
Cabinet maker
Carpenter
Cement finisher
Construction electrician
Cook
Electrical rewind mechanic
Electronics technician — consumer products
Farm equipment mechanic
Floorcovering installer
Glazier
Hairstyling
Heavy duty equipment mechanic
Industrial electrician
Industrial instrument mechanic
Industrial mechanic (millwright)
Insulator (heat and frost)
Ironworker (generalist)
Lather (interior systems mechanic)
Machinist
Mobile crane operator
Motorcycle mechanic
Motor vehicle body repairer (metal and paint)

Oil burner mechanic
Painter and decorator
Partsperson
Plumber
Powerline technician
Recreation vehicle mechanic
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic
Roofer
Sheet metal worker
Sprinkler system installer
Steamfitter/pipefitter
Steel fabricator (fitter)
Tool and die maker
Truck and transport mechanic
Truck-trailer repairer
Welder

*Amended May 1997.

REFERENCES

Aboriginal Relations Office. 1997. *Regional bilateral agreement: Aboriginal flexible funding arrangement handbook.* Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

_____ 1998. *Aboriginal youth: Labor market realities.* Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Presented to the Labor Market Research Forum, June 9, 1998

ACCC (Association of Canadian Community Colleges). 1993. *Germany's dual training system: an overview.* ACCC, Ottawa, Canada. Presented at the ACCC Symposium, October 1993, Vancouver. Unpublished.

Axelson, J. 1993. *Counselling and development in a multi-cultural society* (2nd ed.). Brooks/Cole, Pacific Grove, CA, USA.

Ball, L.V. 1995. *Residential schools and First Nations families: A legacy of cultural and personal discontinuity.* University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC, Canada. Unpublished manuscript.

Berlin, I.N. 1987. Suicide among American Indian adolescents: an overview. *Suicide and Life- threatening Behaviour,* 17(3), 218-232.

CLFDB (Canadian Labour Force Development Board). 1996. *National Apprenticeship Symposium: As was said report.* CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada.

CLFDB National Apprenticeship Committee. 1994. *Apprenticeship as a model for transition into employment.* CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada.

_____ 1994. *Expansion of the apprenticeship training system.* CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada

_____ 1994. *National standards for the apprenticeable trades.* CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada.

_____ 1995. *Equity in apprenticeship.* CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada.

_____ 1997. *Apprenticeship in transition.* CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada.

Cooper, M., Karlberg, A., Pelletier Adams, L. 1991. *Aboriginal suicide in B.C.* Institute on Family Violence Society, Burnaby, BC, Canada.

Dyck, R.J. 1990. *Behaviour disorders in adolescence.* Plenum Press, New York, NY, USA.

EIC (Employment and Immigration Canada). 1990. *Pathways to success: Aboriginal employment and training strategy: a policy and implementation paper.* Government of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

EIC (Employment and Immigration Canada), Statistics Canada. 1992. *National apprenticeship survey 1989–90.* Government of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Garland, A.F., Zigler, E. 1993. Adolescent suicide prevention. *American Psychologist,* 48(2), 169-182.

Hafen, B.Q., Frandsen, K.J. 1986. *Youth suicide: Depression and loneliness.* Cordillera Press Inc., Denver, CO, USA.

Herring, R.D. 1990. Attacking career myths among First Nations Americans. *School Counsellor,* 38(1), 13-18.

Hobart, C.W. 1981. Performance of Native trainees in an apprenticeship training program. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies,* 1(1).

Hochkirchen, B., Jilek, W. 1985. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry,* 16(2), 25-28.

Indian and Northern Affairs. 1995. *Gathering strength: Canada's Aboriginal action plan.* Government of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

McCormick, R. 1996. Culturally appropriate means and ends of counselling as described by the First Nations people of British Columbia. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling,* 18.

McCormick, R., Amundson, N.E. 1997. A career/life planning model for First Nations people. *Journal of Employment Counselling,* 34(4).

McCormick, R., France, M.H. 1995. Counselling First Nations clients on career issues: implications for school counsellors. *Guidance and Counselling*, 10(2).

Ministry of Supply and Services. 1996. *Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* Government of Canada, Ottawa, Canada. MSS # C96-980366-4.

Paul, P. 1993. *Understanding the barriers to creating a successful Aboriginal employment strategy: Final report.* Canadian Labour Force Development Board Task Force on Transition to Employment, CLFDB, Ottawa, Canada.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal People. 1996. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People.* Canada Communications Group, Ottawa, Canada.

Tuk, T.A., Macdonald, J. 1995. *Suicide, homicide and gun deaths in BC.* Ministry of Health, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Walsh, J. 1996. *Apprenticeship in the 21st century: Change, challenge, and opportunity.* Canadian Labour Force Development Board, Ottawa, Canada.